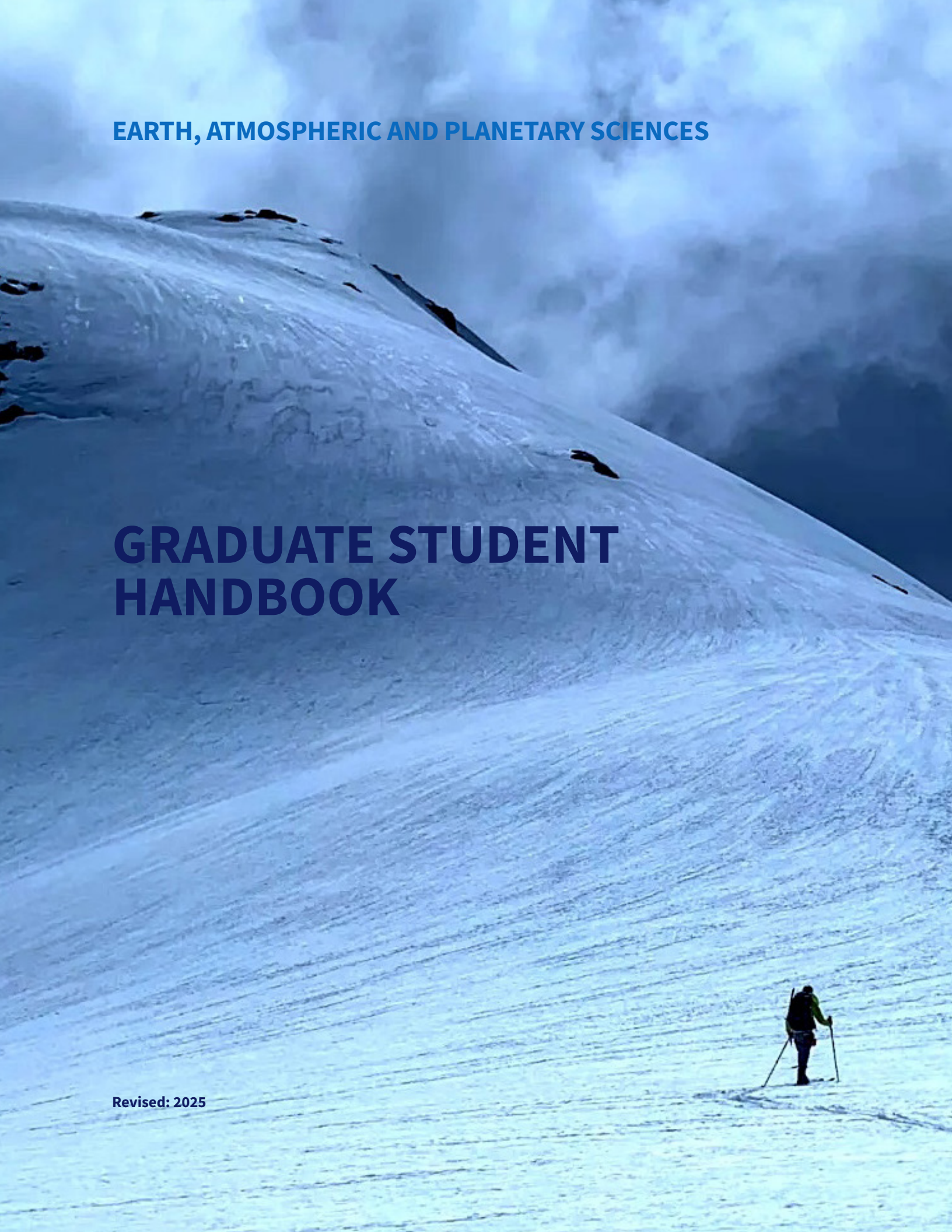


A full-page background image of a person in a green jacket and dark pants climbing a steep, snow-covered mountain. The climber is positioned in the lower right corner, using ice axes and ropes. The mountain slope is steep and covered in snow with some dark patches. The sky is filled with heavy, grey clouds.

EARTH, ATMOSPHERIC AND PLANETARY SCIENCES

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

Revised: 2025

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook describes the graduate program (doctoral and master's) in the Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences (EAPS). It supplements the Graduate Policies and Procedures which outline the general Institute requirements and is available on the web at <https://oge.mit.edu/gpp/>, as well as the Registrar's Policies found on the web at: <https://registrar.mit.edu/> and the [MIT-GSU Collective Bargaining Agreement](#). Note that this handbook does not apply to MIT-WHOI Joint Program students.

Students should use this handbook to help guide themselves through the program in consultation with their advisor. Students should also feel free to contact the [EAPS Education Office](#), on the 9th floor of building 54, for further inquiries and assistance.

BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT ACADEMICS IN EAPS

ACADEMIC TERMS

MIT has four terms in the year: Fall Term, Independent Activities Period (IAP), Spring Term, and Summer Term. IAP and Summer Terms are not considered academic terms that count toward degree progress but are periods of time when a student is able to conduct research to continue progress towards a degree. Optional courses are often taught during IAP in EAPS.

REGISTRATION FOR CLASSES

Graduate students need to be registered for both the fall and the spring terms. Doctoral students must be registered for fall, spring and summer terms, unless they will be enrolled in an internship or have some other non-thesis related absence or a medical leave. Doctoral research appointments are directly tied to enrollment. Any student who does not register for a given term is in danger of having their appointment cancelled by the registrar as they are perceived to be not in attendance for that given term.

Pre-registration and registration are accomplished online at <https://registrar.mit.edu/registration-academics>. A student's registration needs to be approved by the advisor. After approval, the student needs to submit the registration to the Registrar. The advisor does not need to approve pre-registration.

For the fall and spring terms, registering for 36 units is considered a full-time load. For summer, 24 units is considered a full-time load. A student must be registered in the summer term if they will be receiving a stipend. EAPS only offers pre-thesis research (Current Research 12.970 or 12.971) and thesis research (12.THG) courses in the summer, currently.

EAPS DISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

There are four education programs in EAPS organized according to disciplinary areas:

- Program in Atmospheres, Oceans, and Climate (PAOC)
- Program in Geology, Geobiology, and Geochemistry (G3)
- Program in Geophysics (PG)
- Program in Planetary Science (PPS)

EAPS COMMITTEE ON THE EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Committee on the Education Program (CEP) represents the departmental faculty in all areas related to educational activities, exercises oversight of the educational program, and provides advice to the Department Head on graduate and undergraduate policy. Its members are the Graduate Officer, Undergraduate Officer, Assistant Director of Academic Programs, and additional members of the EAPS faculty, Senior Lecturers, and research staff. The Graduate Officer and Assistant Director serve as co-chairs on the committee.

RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC ADVISORS

Students admitted to the doctoral and master's programs are assigned a faculty advisor based on the convergence of the research interests of both the advisor and the student. The advisor's primary responsibility is to guide the academic program of the student and serve as research supervisor, often supporting the student as a Research Assistant. Usually, but not always, the faculty advisor assigned to a student at the beginning of the graduate program becomes the thesis supervisor. In the majority of instances, PhD and SM theses completed in the Department will be supervised and signed by current EAPS faculty and retired EAPS faculty who have remained active in the Department.

In some instances, the appropriate research advisor for a graduate student is a Principal or Senior Research Scientist in EAPS. When a Senior Research Scientist is the research advisor, a current member of the EAPS faculty will act as the student's academic advisor. When a Principal Research Scientist is the research advisor, a current member of the EAPS faculty will act as the student's academic advisor and co-Research advisor.

CHANGE OF ADVISOR

A student-advisor relationship is a professional commitment that typically remains in place for the duration of the graduate degree. However, in some circumstances—for example, a major change in research direction or an advising situation that stands in the way of progress—a student may need to change research advisors.

Initial steps

- First have a discussion with one of the EAPS transition coordinators listed [here](#). If there is a conflict with the current advisor or group, it is important to first try to resolve the conflict. Help with mediation of disputes may be obtained from the MIT Ombuds Office. Other steps in consultation with the transition coordinators may include contacting the chair of the disciplinary program, the head of department, or an Assistant Dean in the Office of Graduate Education (OGE).
- In order to change advisor, you should identify a prospective new advisor and they must agree to serve as your new advisor and have a funding plan. Unhealthy advising situations are an exception in which you are not required to have found a new advisor to initiate the transition process (see below). The new advisor will usually be in EAPS. In some cases it may be possible to have a new advisor who is at MIT but outside EAPS.
- Discuss with your prospective new advisor the implications of the change in advisor on your program milestones and graduation date.

Formal request to change advisor

To formally request a change in advisor, send an email request to the [EAPS Education Office](#) (copying the prospective new advisor) with the following information:

- Reason for change in advisor;
- Who the new advisor is and an assertion that the new advisor has agreed to the change and has a funding plan in place; and
- Expected impact on program milestones and graduation date.

The CEP will consider the request and inform the student, prospective advisor and original advisor of the decision.

Unhealthy Advising Situations

MIT has a program that provides guaranteed transitional support of a full semester for students in unhealthy advising situations. This program applies to “advising situations with unresolved conflict in which students raise concerns about behavior that, if true, could constitute bias, harassment, discrimination, other violations of MIT policies, or other aggressive behavior from their advisor or colleagues in the unit they are wishing to transfer from.” The student does not need to have found a new advisor to initiate the transitional period. Please read about the details of this support program [here](#).

PRE-THESIS MENTOR PROGRAM

Pre-thesis mentors are matched with EAPS graduate students and remain with those students until they have formed a thesis committee (first ~2.5 years). Students will be reassigned a mentor if their current mentor becomes a second-generals project advisor, but it should be noted that the mentor may be on the general-exam committee. The Pre-thesis mentor is intended to provide additional support and connections for the graduate student in their early years in the program. The goal is to facilitate deeper connections and stronger support for students. It is not intended to provide oversight on the student’s research advisor or to establish an accountability relationship between advisor and pre-thesis mentor. Once the thesis proposal and committee are approved by the Committee on the Education Program (CEP), students are no longer expected to meet with their faculty mentor but can do so if they find it to be useful. Students instead meet their thesis committees and fill out a short form on progress towards their thesis once a year.

Pre-thesis mentees meet with mentors individually once in Fall term and once in Spring term (or more if desired). Meeting length is typically 20-40 minutes. The student mentee is responsible for setting up meeting each term. It is expected that these are private meetings, but mentors cannot guarantee confidentiality and are asked to communicate overall trends across group to education committee and departmental leadership. A list of confidential resources can be found [here](#). Each time the student meets with their mentor, the student fills in short online form to confirm the meeting occurred and will also be given the opportunity to give optional feedback. This form can be found [here](#).

The main purpose of the first meeting is to get acquainted and establish goals and expectations for the mentoring relationship. Before the first meeting, students should identify their personal and professional goals

for the mentoring relationship. In the first meeting, they should share their academic background, discuss any goals they would like to work towards together, and when the next meeting will occur.

DOCTORAL PROGRAM (PHD)

The doctoral degrees conferred by the department are the Sc.D. (Doctor of Science) and the Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy). The Ph.D. and the Sc.D. degrees are awarded interchangeably in the department and the student can choose which degree they receive. There is no difference in academic program for the Ph.D. or the Sc.D. Both doctoral degrees take approximately five years to complete. The first two years concentrate on course work and preparing for the General Exam, and the final three years are centered on the doctoral thesis. Extensions beyond five years are discussed in the section “Extensions beyond five years” (page 12).

THE FIRST TWO YEARS

CLASSES, RESEARCH AND REGISTRATION

Class Load: During Fall and Spring terms, students must maintain a load of 36 units. Students register for a mix of classes and Current Research in EAPS (12.970/12.971, see below) to prepare for the General Examination. During Summer term students must maintain a load of 24 units of Current Research to work on General Exam Projects.

Choosing Classes: Students will discuss with their advisor what classes to register for each term. The most up-to-date class schedule for EAPS-specific classes will always be found on the EAPS website [here](#).

Current Research: Students may register for Current Research as either letter graded (12.970) or P/D/F (12.971). Registering for Current Research gives students credit for their pre-thesis research conducted while preparing

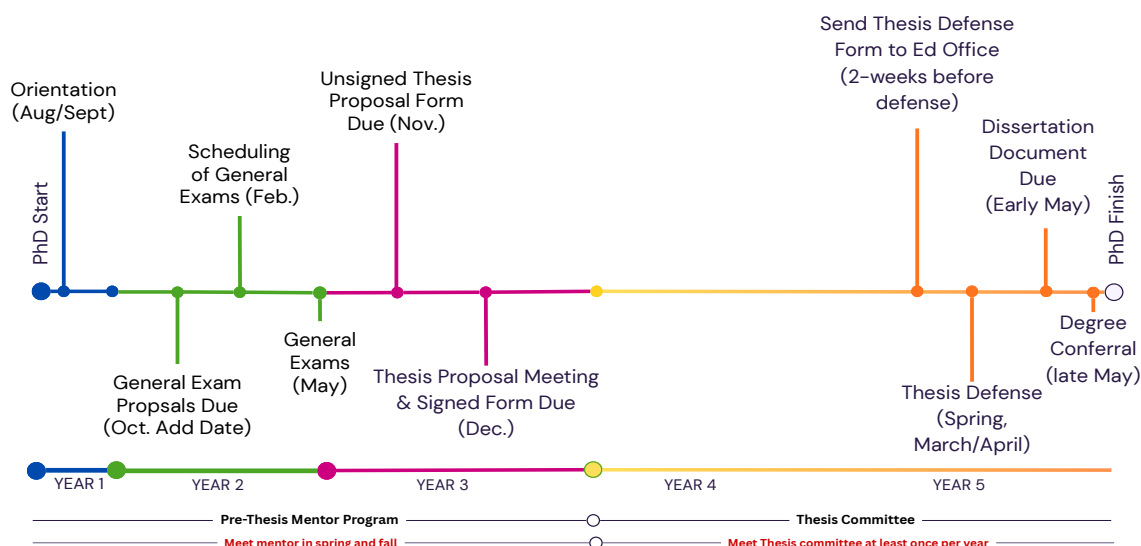


Figure 1: Timeline of major milestones in the doctoral degree.

for the General Examination. Students should discuss with their advisor how many units of Current Research to register for.

First-Year Seminar: Students are encouraged to take 12.900 in their first term. This class is designed for first-year students to learn about the breadth of research in the department and to introduce them to resources that they may use throughout their graduate education.

Grades: In order to maintain satisfactory standing in the department students are expected to receive a grade of “B” or better in all subjects that are letter graded and a “P” in subjects that are graded P/D/F. Information on grade definitions and grading policies may be found [here](#).

GENERAL EXAMINATION

The General Examination serves the dual purpose of assessing a student’s readiness to proceed with research that will lead to a PhD and ensuring that a student has a grasp of the foundational knowledge in the chosen field. All students are expected to take the General Examination before the start of the fifth academic term, or before the fourth academic term if they already have an EAPS master’s degree. (Summer and IAP are not, for these purposes, considered academic terms.)

GENERAL EXAM PROPOSALS

Students submit their [General Examination Proposal](#) to the Education Office by the Add Date on the Registrar’s Academic Calendar in the term prior to the one in which they take the exam. For most students this will be the Add Date in the fall term with the exam occurring in the spring term. The General Examination Proposal includes the proposal form and two project abstracts. The proposal is reviewed and approved by the Committee on the Education Program (CEP). The CEP will add ad-hoc members to ensure it has sufficient expertise to evaluate all proposals.

EXAM COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The exam committee consists of at least four members from the EAPS faculty, senior lecturers, and senior research staff (Principal and Senior Research Scientists). Additional members from outside EAPS holding positions of similar rank may sometimes be included. Faculty members should include:

- Student’s research advisor
- Second paper advisor
- One member must be from a specialty different from that of the student
- A predominant number of faculty from EAPS

The chairperson for the examination committee will be named by the CEP and will be someone other than the primary research advisor. The committee should represent a sufficiently broad spectrum of research specialties to ensure a “general” rather than “topical” examination. See, STRUCTURE OF THE GENERAL EXAMINATION (pg. 10) below for more details on selecting paper advisors and projects.

SCHEDULING OF THE GENERAL EXAMINATION

The exams are scheduled by the [EAPS Education Office](#) and typically occur in mid-May. The Education Office will send out an inquiry to the student to begin the scheduling process in January. The composition of the exam committee for each student and the location, time and date of the examination are communicated to the student in February. In some cases, it may make sense based on research progress or the availability of committee members (depending on, for example, fieldwork or other travel) to have an earlier examination and this must be scheduled by the student in consultation with the CEP. In exceptional circumstances, the CEP may approve a later date, but the examination should still occur before the start of the fifth academic term or the fourth academic term for those with an EAPS' Traditional Master's degree (see "Delay of exam" section below for exams that occur after this deadline). If a student has had a delayed start date to their PhD program at MIT, the schedule for the proposal and exam are adjusted accordingly.

STRUCTURE OF THE GENERAL EXAMINATION

The General Examination consists of written and oral parts. The written part requires the student to prepare two formal research reports. The written material should describe a significant new problem, outline the present state of knowledge in the appropriate field, propose an approach for addressing the problem, and discuss progress made towards reaching a solution.

Usually, the first paper, which is advised by the student's academic advisor, is on the topic the student intends to use for the doctoral thesis. The second paper is advised by an EAPS faculty member or senior research staff member (Senior Researcher or Principal Research Scientist). Exceptions in which the second-paper advisor is from outside of EAPS must be petitioned to the CEP prior to starting the research, and the research area must not be covered by an EAPS faculty member or senior research staff member.

The two papers must address problems in significantly different specialties. Students are advised to consult as early as possible with their advisor(s) and the CEP if they are unsure as to whether their papers are sufficiently distinct. Differences in approach (field/lab/modeling/theory) may help to distinguish the papers, but such differences in approach are generally not sufficient to distinguish the papers if the papers are in the same research specialty. For example, it is generally not acceptable to submit two papers in the same research specialty with one paper being a field study (or other data collection and analysis) and the other paper a modeling study. Applying the same specific technique to two different research problems also reduces the extent to which the papers are considered to be distinct. In deciding whether two papers are in the same research specialty, it is helpful to consider whether the papers would have overlap in their citation lists.

The total length of the two papers combined should not exceed 40 pages double-spaced or 20 pages single-spaced, including figures and references. Students should discuss with their advisor if the page count is more than this. Example general exam papers from previous years are available [here](#). The student is responsible for submitting the final written papers to the General Examination committee at least two weeks prior to the exam. Students should get high-level feedback on their papers from their project advisors prior to submitting the papers to the examination committee.

The oral part of the exam consists of short (20 minutes maximum) presentations by the student on the research papers. Each presentation is followed by an oral questioning period in which committee members question the candidate in depth about the paper. In addition to material directly relevant to the two research papers, some questions in the exam will cover material that is foundational to the student's chosen discipline and research

topics. The exam committee chair will offer the committee an opportunity during the exam to ask foundational knowledge questions, preferably near the end of the exam since foundational concepts are often covered in the process of questioning students about their research projects. The scope of the foundational questions is partly guided by the classes the student has taken, and the exam committee will review the classes taken by the student prior to the start of the exam.

The exam typically takes two hours, but three hours will be scheduled to allow for a longer exam if necessary and to give time for committee discussion.

GENERAL EXAMINATION OUTCOMES

Substantial weight is given to both papers in deciding the outcome of the examination, and students are expected to devote substantial effort to both papers. However, the examination committee will take into account that one of the papers will often align with the student's main expertise and anticipated thesis topic, whereas the second paper may place more emphasis on exploration and intellectual breadth.

There are four possible outcomes of the exam: Pass, Conditional Pass, Deferred Decision, or Fail.

- **Pass:** In this case, the student will enter into the final phase of the doctoral program upon submission of an approved thesis proposal.
- **Conditional Pass:** In this case, the examination committee gives limited conditions to the student that must be met before the student passes the examination. Conditions may include but are not limited to completions of incompletes in coursework, taking additional classes to increase knowledge in a particular area, etc. The student must complete any requirements involving coursework as soon as possible. For any conditional pass requirements other than coursework, the committee will meet with the student no later than 6 months after the examination to determine if the student has met the Conditional Pass requirements. If conditions have successfully been met, then the conditional pass will be replaced with a Pass. If conditions have not been met, the Conditional Pass will be changed to a Fail.
- **Deferred Decision (Retake Part of Exam):** In this case, the committee recommends retaking part or all of the exam. The re-examination is to be scheduled with the approval of the CEP and is usually expected to take place within three months of the original exam.
- **Fail:** In this case, the committee is not satisfied with the student's progress toward the doctoral degree or their performance in the examination. Receiving this grade officially terminates the student's participation in the doctoral program. The committee has the option of recommending a student for a Masters degree. If a Masters degree is recommended the student will still need to meet all the requirements for the Master's degree including a thesis to receive the degree. Master's degree requirements are found [here](#).

A "pass", "conditional pass" or "deferred decision" is official -- and communicated to the student -- immediately after the exam. A "fail" is provisional and is reviewed by disciplinary faculty; in this case the student is told immediately after the exam that they have received a provisional failing grade, but they will only receive their official result after a review by disciplinary faculty. Regardless of the exam outcome, the chair of the exam committee will write a letter to the student, with a copy to the [EAPS Education Office](#), explaining the final decision and any specific conditions (in the case of a conditional pass or deferred decision), and/or offering feedback and any recommendations (for any outcome).

REQUEST TO DELAY AN EXAM

If a student finds it impossible to complete the exam on schedule, the student must petition the CEP for an extension at least one month prior to the deadline (start of the fifth academic term, or the fourth academic term for those with an EAPS' Master's degree). The petition must include a detailed statement of the reasons for failure to take the exam on time, a supporting letter from the faculty advisor, and a firm timetable for completing the exam. No extensions will be given unless there are compelling reasons (e.g., unplanned absence of the faculty advisor, personal tragedy), and all extensions will include a time limit for taking a rescheduled exam. If a student does not take the examination on time and has not received an extension, CEP may recommend to the Institute Committee on Graduate Programs that the student be denied further registration. If this occurs, the student must apply formally to the Admissions Committee for re-entry into the doctoral program. Submit all questions and requests to the [EAPS Education Office](#).

THIRD YEAR AND BEYOND

THESIS

The final steps for obtaining a Ph.D. or Sc.D. degree are the completion of a written thesis and its successful defense. Defense of the thesis occurs in a public presentation followed by a private defense with the student's committee. The thesis must demonstrate a new and original contribution to the student's discipline area and show that the student can carry out independent research at the highest levels. The thesis must be judged to be satisfactory by the thesis advisor and the thesis committee. The thesis is not required to have been published in peer-reviewed journal articles, but students are encouraged to present their research at conferences and submit completed work to peer-reviewed journals throughout their PhD.

EXTENSION BEYOND FIVE YEARS

The doctoral thesis for all EAPS students should be completed and defended within ten academic terms (five years) after entrance into the program, and it is the role of the advisor to ensure that the student adheres to a research schedule that will lead to fulfillment of this requirement. If a student is unable to finish within ten terms, the student must submit a written Extension Request (Appendix H) to the CEP requesting a time extension. Extensions will seldom be longer than one year. If a student does not receive an extension from CEP or does not meet the extended deadline, then they are no longer eligible to receive financial support regardless of the source.

REGISTERING FOR THESIS RESEARCH (12.THG)

Once a student has successfully passed the General Exam, they no longer register for Current Research in EAPS (12.970/12.971), and instead register for Thesis (12.THG) for 36 units each for fall and spring terms and 24 units for summer term. The student registers for 12.THG for every term (Fall, Spring, Summer) for the rest of the program.

The grades for 12.THG are as follows:

- Satisfactory progress on thesis research is noted by a "J" grade, and unsatisfactory progress is noted by a "U" grade.

- Awarding a J- grade indicates that a student partially met expectations for satisfactory performance or progress in the subject, but expectations were not fully satisfied. As with other +/- modifiers, the minus is for internal advising purpose only. It will not appear on the student's official transcript and is not used in calculating their grade point average.
- In the final term after a student submits the final thesis to the EAPS , they will receive an “SA” grade indicating successful completion of the thesis. The grade will be submitted the day that you turn in your thesis to the EAPS .

More info on grades and grading policies maybe found here: <https://registrar.mit.edu/classes-grades-evaluations/grades/grading-policies>

ESTABLISHING A THESIS COMMITTEE

Following the successful completion of the General Examination, the student must notify the CEP of the members of their initial Thesis Exam Committee (TC) within six months via the [Thesis Committee Selection and Proposal Form](#) (typically due November of the third year). The CEP has the final authority on the composition of the TC.

The TC is comprised of at least four members, including:

- The student's thesis advisor
- One EAPS faculty member
- One EAPS faculty member outside of research field. If this member is not outside of the student's disciplinary program area, a rationale must be submitted for why they are out of research field.
- One member, approved by the CEP, from outside the department (preferably from outside MIT). The thesis proposal presentation can proceed even if the outside thesis committee member has not yet been identified. However, it is desirable to identify the outside thesis committee member as early as possible, as the participation in the thesis proposal presentation by an outside committee member is encouraged.

Principal and Senior Research Scientists may serve as committee members and members may be added beyond the above requirement. However, the majority of the committee members must be EAPS faculty.

The role of a committee member is to provide support and guidance to a student's research, and members should be chosen with that in mind. The student will work with their faculty advisor to determine who to ask to serve on the TC. The choice of an external member should include due consideration of the travel costs involved to attend the defense in person and/or whether this individual can only attend virtually.

If for some reason you believe it may be difficult for all committee members to attend the defense either in person or via video conference, then you should add a fifth member to the committee to ensure that you are able to have a quorum of four members present for the defense. Only members present for the defense can vote on whether the thesis was successfully defended.

THESIS PROPOSAL

Within six months of passing the General Examination the student will submit a thesis proposal and present it to the TC for approval. The proposal is typically 15-30 pages and should outline what will constitute the thesis, the key questions for each topic, the background of the problem, and the goals of the research. Example thesis proposals from previous years are available [here](#). The TC will consider the worthiness and feasibility of the proposed research, whether the proposal has the potential to demonstrate the candidate's ability to contribute to the field, and whether there are resources available for appropriate supervision and execution. Once the thesis proposal is approved by the TC, the [Thesis Committee Selection and Proposal Form](#) should be signed and submitted to the Education Office along with the abstract for the thesis proposal (typically due December of the third year).

Failure to complete the thesis proposal and submit the form to the Education Office at the six-month mark will result in a warning from the Department. Continued failure to complete a thesis proposal one year after passing the General Examination will result in a warning of poor progress from the Vice Chancellor. Further delay in completing a thesis proposal will result in denial of registration.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

It is highly recommended that the student meet with their TC at a minimum of once per year. In committee meetings the student should update the committee on the progress made on the thesis research and receive feedback from the committee. While the thesis advisor will monitor the student's progress, the committee meetings serve as another level of oversight of the thesis and help to provide feedback to the student. Students can also meet individually with TC members between committee meetings. Each time the student meets with their TC, the student should fill in a short online form to confirm the meeting occurred. This form can be found [here](#).

PREPARING FOR AND SCHEDULING A THESIS DEFENSE

- Pre-defense seminar requirement for PAOC students: In the semester prior to the thesis defense, PAOC students should give a pre-defense seminar.
- Getting on the degree list: MIT awards degrees in June, February, and September. During the first week of the fall, spring, and summer terms, students who wish to graduate submit a petition to be included on the current degree list through WEBSIS. Petitions submitted after the deadline require the payment of a Late Fee. It is always easier for a student to leave the degree list at the last minute (no penalty involved), than to be added after the deadline.
- Selecting a Thesis Chair: Prior to the thesis defense, the student and the advisor will select a Thesis Chair. The chair may not be the advisor or the external member of the TC.
- Discuss with your advisor what is expected for the chapters of the thesis including the introduction and conclusions chapters.
- Scheduling the Defense: Two months before defense—work with your committee members to finalize a date and time the committee is available for the defense. One month before defense—meet with committee members to discuss your thesis draft and receive feedback.

- Two weeks before defense—get copies of the thesis to all members of the committee. The student will also submit a copy of the thesis to the [EAPS Education Office](#) along with the Defense Scheduling Form (Appendix D). The will then publicize the defense on department calendars and in Building 54, work with the student on acquiring rooms and scheduling any necessary Zoom rooms. To guide you through the process of preparing for and scheduling a Thesis Defense, a checklist can be found [here](#).

THESIS DEFENSE

All members of the TC must be present at the defense, either in person or via teleconferencing (in person is encouraged). The defense consists of a public oral presentation of results followed by one or two rounds of questioning, as determined by the Chair of the TC. After the thesis defense, the advisor will submit the signed sheet stating the TC's acceptance or rejection of the thesis to the [EAPS Education Office](#).

The doctoral thesis is presented to and defended before the TC and the greater academic community. The defense is intended to demonstrate that the student has carried out a program of independent research of a creditable standard and that they can present the results coherently.

Defenses should be conducted on the MIT campus during normal working hours. Permission to give a defense completely virtually must be requested from the CEP. The student makes a 45-to-60-minute presentation of the chief results and conclusions of the research. This presentation is open and may be attended by other students and staff members. General discussion and questions from the audience may follow this presentation. Examination by the TC is done in private after the public presentation, although the chair may invite interested staff or visiting faculty to remain as observers. All members of the TC shall vote on the acceptability of the thesis and its presentation.

Opinions and impressions of faculty and staff observers also present at the defense are welcome and encouraged. However, only members of the TC may vote and a majority vote is necessary to pass. A quorum for the meeting requires that the minimum membership of the TC, as defined earlier in this document, must be present. A member of the TC must be present at the defense (either in person or via teleconferencing) to register a vote. Any comments or opinions offered by a member of the TC prior to or immediately following the Defense are not equivalent to a vote on the acceptability of the thesis.

Dissatisfaction with the written thesis may result in required rewriting. In this case, a new defense may or may not be required but the TC must certify that the work has been done before the thesis is accepted and the degree awarded. Failure could result in termination from the program or a requirement that additional work be carried out by the student on the thesis project, in which case a new defense must be scheduled but with as many of the original TC members as is possible.

THESIS DEFENSE OUTCOMES

- Pass: the student has passed the thesis defense. The TC may have some edits for the written thesis that they will give to the student to update. The student will work with the advisor to complete any updates and then the student will submit the final thesis to the EAPS .
- Dissatisfaction: this requires major rewriting of the thesis. The TC will determine if the student is required to complete another thesis defense or not. In this case the TC must review the updated work and vote to determine if the rewritten work results in a pass for the thesis. The TC will inform the [EAPS](#)

[Education Office](#) if the student passes or fails the thesis.

- Failure: there are two possible outcomes for failure. The first is termination from the Ph.D. program. The second is that the TC recommends the student carry out additional research to enhance the thesis project. In this case a new defense will be scheduled. The TC membership should remain the same as in the original defense. Only in extenuating circumstances approved by the CEP will substitutions be allowed to committee membership.

THESIS SUBMISSION

After successfully defending the thesis and making any required changes the student will submit their digital thesis to the [EAPS Education Office](#). A checklist of thesis submission requirements is found [here](#).

Students will follow the MIT Specifications for Thesis Preparation available on the MIT Libraries website here: <http://libraries.mit.edu/archives/thesis-specs/>. The only exception to these guidelines is on the signature page. An EAPS thesis will have the signature line for the Department Head in place of the Graduate Officer as indicated in the MIT Guidelines. The advisor also signs the Thesis. When a Senior Research Scientist is the research advisor, they will be responsible for signing the completed thesis. When a Principal Research Scientist is a co-research advisor, both the Principal Research Scientist and the faculty co-research advisor should sign the thesis.

You are responsible for acquiring signature from your advisor. Please set up your thesis to accept signatures through [DocuSign](#) via IS&T (Kerberos required). If you have questions, please reference our [illustrated guide](#) or contact the [EAPS Education Office](#).

The MIT Library only accepts digital copies of thesis documents. Copies of the thesis that the student submits to the EAPS must be in digital format only, one unsigned and one signed copy each. [EAPS Education Office](#) staff will double check your formatting before submitting a copy to the MIT Library and will notify you if they see anything that needs to be corrected before final submission. When emailing your thesis to the , please cc your primary advisor requesting final approval of the thesis copy.

The [EAPS Education Office](#) announces via email at the beginning of each term the deadline to submit thesis to the EAPS Education Office in order to receive your degree for that term. Failure to submit thesis by this date will result in removal from the degree list.

LEAVING WITH A MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE

Occasionally students may decide to withdraw from the doctoral program and leave with a Masters Degree. All masters students are required to complete the degree requirements for the Master's Degree including courses and thesis. If a student decides to leave with a Masters Degree the [EAPS Education Office](#) must be informed so that the appropriate changes may be made to the student's record in the Registrar's Office.

DOCTORAL FUNDING

Students are funded via a Graduate Student Appointment. Appointments are either Fellowships, Research Assistantships, or Teaching Assistantships. A full appointment covers tuition, health insurance and a stipend. [Stipend rates](#) are set each year by the Office of the Vice Chancellor in consultation with the Provost, the

Chancellor, the School Deans, and upon the recommendation by the Graduate Student Council Stipends Committee. Stipend rates are updated annually.

FELLOWSHIPS (FE)

Fellowships are generally nine-month appointments (September—May) though some may be for only one term.

It is important for US domestic students to know that tax is not withheld from fellowship stipend payments. Students will need to review their own tax situation to determine how much income to save for tax season.

International students should consult with the [International Student Office](#) for any tax implications on fellowships.

Information on Office of Graduate Education (OGE) Competitive Fellowships which are offered annually, can be found [here](#).

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIP (RA)

RA appointments are generally for the academic year plus the summer. All students are on RA appointments for the summer regardless of academic year appointment. Further information on RA appointments may be found [here](#).

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP (TA)

Some TA appointments are available during the academic year (September—May). The CEP and the Education Office review class offerings to determine the eligibility of a class to receive TA support and inform the faculty teaching the class of the level of TA support the class will receive. Faculty then solicit students to TA their classes.

The duties of a TA include but are not limited to: assisting faculty with grading, providing instruction in class, lab or recitation, preparing lab apparatus and materials, assisting with course web-based materials, assisting on field trips, etc. Full TA appointments are expected to require no more than 20 hours of work per week. 50% TA appointments are expected to require no more than 10 hours of work per week. For more information on TA appointments please see: Graduate Appointments and [Teaching in EAPS](#).

Students may serve as TAs for either a full-time (20 hours per week on average) or half-time (10 hours per week on average) graduate student appointment. Those students serving as TAs should NOT register for credit in 12.446 as they are considered employee positions under the [MIT-GSU Collective Bargaining Agreement](#).

For information on other types of teaching opportunities, see Teaching in EAPS and Teaching Traineeships on pg. 23.

MIT GSU CBA

For additional information about RA or TA appointments, please see the [MIT-GSU Collective Bargaining Agreement](#). In the event of any conflict between this handbook and the CBA, the CBA governs.

MASTERS OF SCIENCE PROGRAM (SM)

OBJECTIVES

- To equip the student with a solid background in earth, atmospheric and planetary sciences.
- To train the student to have strong quantitative problem-solving abilities.
- To allow the student to pursue deeper study of a specialized area of earth, atmospheric, or planetary sciences by completion of original research via the thesis.

PROGRAM AND GRADES

Students register for a minimum of 36 units per academic term (24 units if enrolled for summer term).

Students must complete at least 66 units of subjects excluding thesis units (12.THG). Students are permitted to take subjects offered in other departments to supplement the EAPS offerings. 12.900: EAPS First Year Graduate Seminar can be applied to the 66 units requirement. Students should consult with their academic advisor to select courses that best prepare them for the research they plan to pursue. Satisfactory performance is defined as a grade point average of 3.5 or higher, and a grade of “A” or “B” in subjects related to the student’s program of study. Research in EAPS (12.970/12.971) can be taken, but thesis research should be taken under 12.THG.

Students complete a master’s level thesis and thesis defense. Students have the option for a private or a public thesis defense. Students should consult with their advisor regarding the expectations for the thesis. The level of the master’s thesis is generally similar to that of a high-quality peer-reviewed journal article, but it does not have to be published already in a journal.

The grades for 12.THG for SM students are as follows:

- Satisfactory progress on thesis research is noted by a “J” grade, and unsatisfactory progress is noted by a “U” grade.
- Awarding a J- grade indicates that a student partially met expectations for satisfactory performance or progress in the subject, but expectations were not fully satisfied. As with other +/- modifiers, the minus is for internal advising purpose only. It will not appear on the student’s official transcript and is not used in calculating their grade point average.
- In the final term after a student submits the final thesis to the EAPS , they will receive a letter grade from their thesis committee, provided by the thesis advisor. The grade will be submitted the day that you turn in your thesis to the EAPS Education Office.

More information on grades and grading policies may be found here: <https://registrar.mit.edu/classes-grades-evaluations/grades/grading-policies>

MASTERS THESIS COMMITTEE

The Thesis Committee (TC) for an EAPS Masters Degree is composed of the student’s advisor and at least two members of the EAPS faculty. Senior and Principal Research Scientists in EAPS may also serve on the TC, but a

majority of members and the chair must be EAPS faculty.

TRADITIONAL MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE

The Traditional SM is a two-year program. Before the Add Date (usually the first week of October; see, [MIT Academic Calendar](#)) in the third term of study, the student should submit a [Thesis Committee Selection and Proposal Form](#) to the EAPS Education Office for approval by the CEP. Along with the committee form, students should include a title and abstract for their thesis topic.

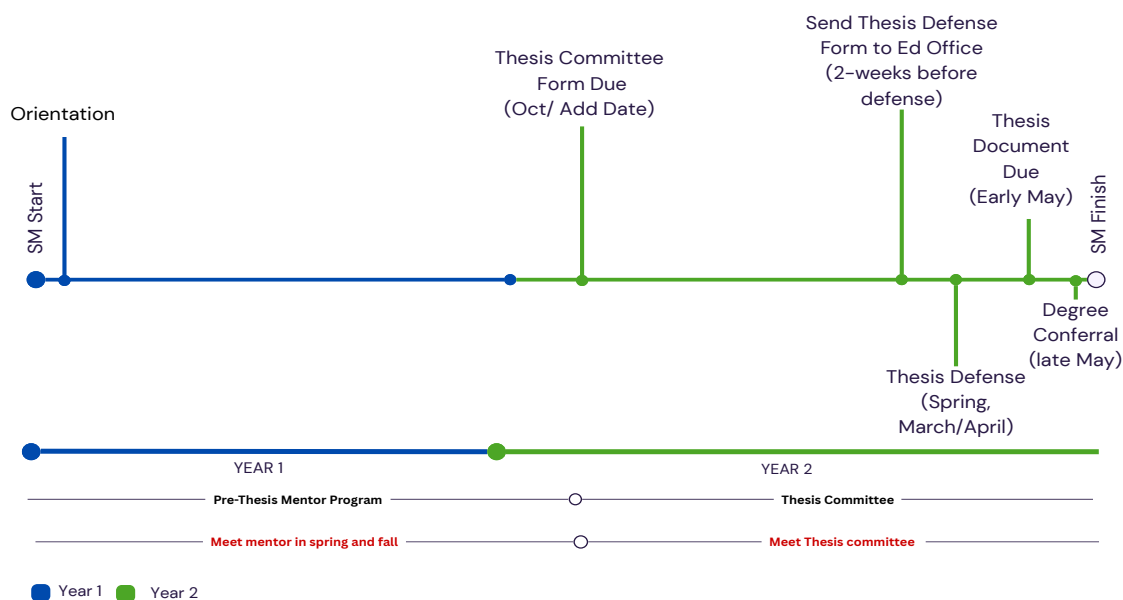


Figure 2. Timeline of major milestones in the Traditional SM degree (2 years); 5th-year masters have a similar timeline but compressed into a single year.

FIFTH-YEAR MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE

MIT undergraduates in EAPS and closely allied disciplines of study at MIT are eligible to apply to the EAPS Fifth-Year Master of Science Program. The Fifth-Year Masters may be completed simultaneously with the SB or after the SB has been completed. These students are expected to finish [all degree requirements](#) of a Traditional Masters degree (see, Traditional Master of Science Degree above) within two academic terms. This means that the thesis proposal is on an accelerated timeline, due by the Add Date of their first year. Students in the 5th year degree should prepare themselves for this year by discussing their thesis options with their primary advisor early, for example, during their senior year in the SB or the summer prior to starting the SM.

Continuation into a final summer term to complete thesis is acceptable. Any further extension beyond an additional summer term requires the permission of the CEP. Permission may be obtained by submitting a petition to the CEP that details why an extension is needed, when completion of the program is expected, and the signature of the student's faculty advisor indicating support for the petition. Petitions should be submitted to the [EAPS Education Office](#).

If you receive your Bachelor and Masters degrees sequentially, you will write two theses. The two theses differ in depth and independence, but your undergraduate thesis or independent research project can serve as the nucleus for your master thesis. If you receive your Bachelor and Master's degrees simultaneously, EAPS and MIT will accept your master's thesis as fulfillment of the undergraduate requirement, but you will still have to register and receive credit for 12.TIP and 12.THU. For simultaneous award of Bachelor and Masters Degrees, the student must (1) be an undergraduate MIT student who is enrolled as a candidate for the bachelor's degree, (2) must apply for graduate admission in the traditional way, and (3) must register as a full-time regular graduate student for a minimum of one regular academic term.

Note that students can take graduate classes while still an undergraduate. You will initially receive undergraduate credit, but after your admission to the SM, you can petition to have the credit converted to graduate credit. The courses chosen must not have been counted for your undergraduate degree audit.

BOTH MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREES

Once the student has submitted the Thesis Committee Selection and Proposal form, the remaining steps are the same.

- ▶ A copy of the thesis must be given to all members of the TC two weeks prior to the thesis defense.
- ▶ The thesis defense must be scheduled at least two weeks prior to the date of the defense by submitting a Thesis Defense Scheduling Form (Appendix E) to the [EAPS Education Office](#).
- ▶ All members of the TC must attend the defense in person, unless there is extenuating circumstance that allows for video conferencing. Consult with the Education Office if you have questions. The defense will consist of an oral presentation by the student of at least 30 minutes detailing the results of the thesis. The presentation will be followed by two rounds of questioning by the TC. After the defense the Thesis Chair will submit a signed form indicating the TC's acceptance or rejection of the thesis as well as a letter grade to the [EAPS Education Office](#).
- ▶ They will announce, via email, at the start of each academic term the date that the final thesis must be submitted with signature of the student and the advisor to the EAPS. Only digital copies will be accepted. Make sure that you submit an unsigned cover sheet as well as a signed cover sheet to the [EAPS Education Office](#).
- ▶ Students will follow the MIT Specifications for Thesis Preparation available on the MIT Libraries website here: <http://libraries.mit.edu/archives/thesis-specs/>. The only exception to these guidelines is on the signature page. An EAPS thesis will have the signature line for the Department Head in place of the Graduate Officer as indicated in the MIT Guidelines.

You are responsible for acquiring signature from your advisor. Please set up your thesis to accept signatures through [DocuSign](#) via IS&T (Kerberos required). If you have questions, please reference our [illustrated guide](#) or contact the [EAPS Education Office](#).

Education Office staff will double check your formatting before submitting copy to the MIT Library and will notify you if they see anything that needs to be corrected before final submission. When emailing your thesis to the Education Office, please cc your primary advisor requesting final approval of the thesis copy.

MASTERS DEGREE FUNDING

Funding is not guaranteed to Masters students. If an advisor chooses to fund a student, please note that funding could change from term to term depending on availability of funds. An advisor may be able to fund a Masters student for the entire program, unable to fund them at all, or be able to fund a student for a term or two depending on resources. If financial support is available it will come in the form of either a Research Assistantship (RA) or a Teaching Assistantship (TA) that will cover tuition, stipend and health insurance. If a student has an external fellowship, that may be used to cover all or part of the educational expense. Students should look for competitive fellowships via the [OGE Fellowships Office](#).

TRANSITION FROM MASTERS TO DOCTORAL PROGRAM

After a student has started a Masters program in EAPS, the student and advisor might decide that a move into the doctoral program would be appropriate or desirable. This change in status requires the completion of all the requirements for the Masters program. The student should consult with the Education Office on how to submit an application for review by the CEP no earlier than one month prior to the student's defense of the master's thesis. In all cases the application must be submitted before the finished master's thesis is given to the [EAPS Education Office](#). New GRE scores are not required and scores from the previous application should be included on the application for reference. A total of two letters of support are required: one from the masters research advisor and one from the proposed advisor for the doctoral research. If the same person will be the advisor for both projects, a faculty member familiar with the student's work should write the second letter. The Masters thesis can be used as one research project for the General Exam, but this option should be discussed among the student, advisor, and the members of the general exam committee.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION - ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS

Please note that a broader spectrum of information on being a graduate student at MIT can be found via [GRADCentral](#).

CHILDBIRTH ACCOMMODATION AND PARENTAL LEAVE

Students may take Childbirth Accommodation and/or Parental Leave per the guidelines established by the Office of Graduate Education [here](#) and in the [MIT-GSU Collective Bargaining Agreement](#).

EAPS has a lactation room located in building 54 on the 8th floor. Ask the Education Office for the access code, if needed.

EAPS GRADUATE EDUCATION SUPPORT FUND AND HOUGHTON FUND

The [EAPS Graduate Education Support Fund \(GESF\)](#) aims to enhance the education of EAPS-advised graduate students in their first two years by supporting participation in approved scientific meetings related to their area of study and the purchase of textbooks necessary for their classes and research. EAPS graduate students in their first two years, including students in the MIT-WHOI Joint Program whose primary advisor is in EAPS are eligible to apply. Graduate students may request up to \$2,000 total per student. Types of allowable expense include

travel to scientific meetings relevant to the student's area of research and textbooks necessary for classes and research. Computers and hardware are not eligible. PG, PGGG, and PPS students should apply by following the instructions [here](#). The Houghton Fund serves a similar purpose for PAOC students. More information on the Houghton Fund can be found [here](#).

EAPS STUDENT RESEARCH FUND (EAPS SRF) AND HOUGHTON FUND

The [EAPS Student Research Fund](#) is available to help graduate students in Geology, Geobiology, and Geochemistry, Geophysics, and Planetary Science conduct research on special projects in cases when other means of department or faculty support are not available. Requests to help support travel to disciplinary meeting for the purpose of presenting research results are also funded. A request for proposals is sent out twice a year, at the beginnings of the Fall and Spring terms. The funds are awarded by the CEP on the basis of need and merit of the project and are usually in the range of \$200-\$1000, but higher amounts will be considered. The SRF has a fixed amount of money that can be distributed over the academic year. Applications for the SRF funds must indicate advisor approval of the project and their ability to contribute funds. Requests for funding should not include computers or similar technology to be used in research labs on campus. The Houghton Fund serves a similar purpose for PAOC students. More information on the Houghton Fund can be found [here](#).

ENGLISH EVALUATION TEST (EET)

The English Evaluation Test (EET) is a diagnostic test of academic English given before each semester at the request of the Office of Graduate Education (OGE). MIT's English Language Studies Program (ELS) administers the EET. The EET is designed for international graduate students from non-English-language academic backgrounds. The EET consists of assessments of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar. It identifies weaknesses in academic speaking and writing English that may interfere with course work, teaching, and research at MIT. EAPS expects that any international student whose primary language of instruction from the age of six through high school was not in English take the EET and work with ELS administrators if they require additional training. More information can be found [here](#).

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE POLICY

Any registered student may request a Medical Leave. Students pursuing a Medical Leave should refer to the [Office of Graduate Education](#) and [MIT-GSU Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) for more information on leave policies.

INTERNSHIPS

Internships are an excellent opportunity for students to gain exposure to industry and research opportunities outside of MIT. In general, Ph.D. students should only pursue internships after the completion of the General Examination. If an internship opportunity is pertinent to the student's General Examination research, then a request to participate in an internship prior to the General Examination should be submitted to the CEP by emailing the Education Office. International students must meet with the [International Students Office \(ISO\)](#) for authorization to participate in an internship. The EAPS PhD program does not currently have a practical training requirement.

REMOTE WORK GUIDANCE

Please consult MIT's [Remote Appointment Guidance](#).

TEACHING IN EAPS AND TEACHING TRAINEESHIPS

EAPS does not have an academic teaching requirement in its graduate program. However, we encourage students to acquire teaching experience especially if preparing for future teaching positions. One option is to take a (paid) Teaching Assistant position if a suitable position is available.

Another option is to be a [Teaching Trainee](#) for a class. Teaching Trainees should register for 12.446 (Teaching Experience in EAPS). Teaching experience units should be how many hours on average per week the teaching trainee spends on teaching (for example, 6 hours of training = 6 units of 12.446). Students should continue to receive fellowship awards or RA appointments, if applicable, (not TA/IG appointments) when they are registered for teaching experience as a teaching trainee. Students with an NSF-GRFP may be able to register for 12.446 as a teaching trainee and receive academic credit (not compensation) for teaching; please check for up to date guidance [here](#)

Students can indicate when they are interested in teaching by completing the [Teaching Interest Form](#). When an appropriate position becomes available, the EAPS Education Office will either reach out to the student or give the student's name to an interested faculty member who will reach out directly.

Available teaching opportunities are listed [here](#) and are announced via the EAPS Grad student listserv. The listings are updated periodically when a faculty member has identified that they have not filled a position. Openings generally occur during the registration cycle.

VACATION

Students on RA, TA, or Instructor-G appointments receive 15 days of paid vacation per year (5 days per appointment period). You should work directly with your supervisor for vacation approval. More information on vacation policies are found in the [MIT-GSU Collective Bargaining Agreement](#).

VETERAN BENEFITS

For more information on being an enrolled veteran and veteran's benefits for graduate students, please visit [Student Financial Services](#).

MIT also has an office of Student Veteran Success (SVS). SVS serves as a direct point of contact for students, providing support, advocacy, and programming designed to improve the experience of veterans, students currently serving in the military, and military families who are studying at MIT. To reach SVS, please email: veteransuccess@mit.edu.

APPENDIX A: ACRONYMS

DEPARTMENT ACRONYMS

CEP: Committee on the Education Program

CGCS: Center for Global Change Science

EAPS: Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences

ERL: Earth Resources Laboratory

E-SAC: EAPS Student Advisory Council

ESI: Environmental Solutions Initiative

G3: Program in Geology, Geobiology and Geochemistry

JP: Joint Program in Oceanography

PG: Program in Geophysics

PAOC: Program in Atmospheres, Oceans, and Climate

PPS: Program in Planetary Science

RA: Research Assistantship

REFS: Resources for Easing Friction and Stress

SRF: Student Research Fund

TA: Teaching Assistantship

TC: Thesis Exam Committee

WHOI: Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute

WiXII: Women in Course 12

MIT ACRONYMS

A listing of MIT acronyms may be found at this site: <https://wikis.mit.edu/confluence/display/ACRONYMS/Acronyms+Home/>.

APPENDIX B: EAPS Degree Milestones

The summer before your First Year, you will receive a Pre-Thesis Mentor from the Education Office.

Annual Deadlines (All years)

Fall

Early-September: Register for courses before the deadline

Spring

December-January: Pre-Register for IAP/Spring

Late-January-Early February: Register for IAP/Spring

Mid-Late Spring: Notify advisor and the Office of Education if you receive summer internships

May: Pre-Register for Fall

Complete Pre-Thesis Mentor Reporting Form or Post-Generals Thesis Committee Reporting form to confirm regular meetings (in Fall and Spring for Pre-Thesis Mentors; at least once per year for Thesis Committee)

First Year (G1)

Fall

July: Notify your financial aid officers of any external funding. Contact: Ann Greaney-Williams in the EAPS and Kevin O'Brien, in the Office of Graduate Education

Early-September: Attend Orientation

Early-October: 5th-Year S.M. students submit Thesis Proposals by the Add Date

Meet with your pre-thesis mentor

Spring

Early February: 5th-Year S.M. students apply to graduate in May

Mid-May: 5th-Year S.M. Students submit their Thesis Documents to

Meet with your pre-thesis mentor

Second year (G2)

General Exam: G2 PhD students are required to take their General Exam in the Spring term.

If you need to delay, submit a request to delay your general exam through the Education Office.

Fall

Early-October: PhD students submit their General Exam Proposal Form and two project abstracts to the by the Add Date

Early-October: Traditional S.M. students submit their unsigned Thesis Committee Form by the Add Date

October-November: PhD and traditional S.M students confirm committee selection and thesis proposal; submit signed Thesis Committee Form

Meet with your pre-thesis mentor

Spring

January-Early February: All General Exams Scheduled for May by the

Early February: Traditional S.M. students apply to graduate in May

Mid May: PhD students take General Exams

Mid-May: Traditional SM Students submit their Thesis Documents to the Education Office

Meet with your pre-thesis mentor

Third year (G3) PhD only

Fall

November: Submit unsigned Thesis Committee and Proposal Form to the Education Office for CEP review.

November-December: Submit and Present your Thesis Proposal to your Thesis Committee; submit signed Thesis Proposal and Committee Form to the Education Office.

Meet with your pre-thesis mentor

Spring

Meet with your Thesis Committee at least annually. Send any changes to your Committee to the CEP for review.

Fourth year (G4) PhD only

Meet with your Thesis Committee at least annually. Send any changes to your Committee to the CEP for review.

Fifth year (G5) PhD only

Explore and apply for postdoctoral positions and fellowships and/or other career opportunities.

Meet with your Thesis Committee at least annually. Send any changes to your Committee to the CEP for review.

See below for details on Completing Your Degree.

Spring

Early February: PhD students apply to graduate in May

April-May: PhD students defend their Thesis.

BEYOND FIFTH YEAR (G5+) PhD Only

It is expected that all PhD students will complete and defend within ten academic terms (five years). If you will be continuing past your 5th year, you will need to notify the [Education Office](#) of your intentions. Both student and advisor must submit an Extension Form via the Education Office to the CEP requesting a time extension. Extensions will seldom be longer than one year. If a student does not receive an extension from CEP or does not meet the extended deadline, then they are no longer eligible to receive financial support.

COMPLETING YOUR DEGREE

Degree Application

Understand the MIT degree-completion requirements information here (Registrar) and deadlines here (MIT Academic Calendar).

Complete the degree application via WebSIS by the Registrar's Deadline.

Defense

Book a room for your final defense by completing the Scheduling Form and emailing it to eaps-ed-office@mit.edu. ([Schedule a defense of a PhD Thesis](#); [Schedule a defense of an SM Thesis](#))

If you schedule your own room (e.g., external to EAPS) you must still email [EAPS Education Office](#) well in advance in order for your required documentation to be ready, else your defense cannot take place. You must also get agreement from your full committee to hold your defense in a non-EAPS room.

Dissertation Submission and Commencement

Follow the rules for formatting and submitting your thesis to the MIT Library ([Thesis Checklist](#); [Thesis Specifications](#)).

You will need one signed copy and one unsigned copy for submission.

All signatures can be obtained using Docusign. Details can be found on the EAPS [website](#).

Submit your Thesis to the once it has been approved by your thesis advisor; they will submit the official copy to the Library. All documents are digital submissions. You will also submit a copy via <https://thesis-submit.mit.edu/>.

There is one Commencement Ceremony annually, which takes place at the end of May. All September, February and May graduates may opt to participate in this ceremony.

Get ready for commencement by updating your email and other contact information via WebSIS. Visit the [Commencement website](#).

Once you graduate, update your Alumni Profile on the [Infinite Connection](#) and let us know where you're going!

APPENDIX C: GENERAL EXAM PROPOSAL FORM



Massachusetts Institute of Technology
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Building 54-918
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

Education Office
617-253-3380
eaps-ed-office@mit.edu

General Exam Proposal Form

Student Name (please print): _____ Date: _____

Title Paper 1: _____

Advisor for Paper 1: _____

Title Paper 2: _____

Advisor for Paper 2: _____

Committee

The exam committee consists of at least four members from the EAPS faculty, lecturers, and senior research staff (Principal and Senior Research Scientists). Members should include the student's research advisor, the second paper advisor, a member from a speciality different from that of the student, and a predominant number of faculty from EAPS. Members are chosen so that the committee represents a sufficiently broad spectrum of research specialties to ensure a 'general' rather than a 'topical' examination.

Nominate two members to be on your examining committee in addition to your advisor and second-paper advisor, giving their full names and titles:

Proposed first additional member: _____

Proposed second additional member: _____

Signatures

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Advisor: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Advisor for second paper: _____ Date: _____

Include brief abstracts for the research papers to this form. Each abstract should not exceed 250 words. Add a brief rationale for why the two paper topics should be considered to "address problems in significantly different specialties". If you want to take the exam at a time other than the default General Exam period in May, please also add the requested date and an explanation for why a different date is needed.

Return the form to the EAPS education office by the add date of the semester prior to the exam.

Approval of Graduate Officer: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D: PHD THESIS COMMITTEE SELECTION AND PROPOSAL FORM



Massachusetts Institute of Technology
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Building 54-918
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

Education Office
617-253-3380
eaps-ed-office@mit.edu

PhD Thesis Committee Selection and Proposal Form

Candidate Name: _____ Date: _____

Thesis Tentative Title: _____

First submit this form to the education office with section 1 completed at least one month prior to your thesis proposal presentation so that the Committee on the Education Program can approve your committee. Then, after presenting your thesis proposal to your committee and once they have approved it, submit the form again to the education office with section 2 also completed.

1. COMPOSITION OF THESIS EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

This is: ____ New ____ Amended composition for the committee.

For a new committee, submit this form at least one month prior to your thesis proposal. For an amended committee, submit this form at any time to change the membership of your thesis committee.

Committee Member * _____ Thesis Advisor

Committee Member * _____ EAPS faculty member

Committee Member * _____ EAPS faculty member outside of research field

Committee Member ** _____ Faculty member outside of EAPS

Committee Member _____ Optional

*required members of a committee

** also required; may be identified at any time prior to thesis defense

Note: Thesis committees should consist of majority EAPS affiliated faculty.

The *EAPS faculty member outside of research field* will often be in a different disciplinary program area. If they are in your disciplinary program area, please add a brief rationale for why they should be considered outside of research field.

Title, affiliation, and contact email of *Faculty member outside of EAPS*:

APPENDIX E: SM THESIS COMMITTEE SELECTION AND PROPOSAL FORM



Massachusetts Institute of Technology
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Building 54-918
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

Education Office
617-253-3380
eaps-ed-office@mit.edu

SM Thesis Committee Selection and Proposal Form

Complete and return this form to the Education Office.

Candidate Name: _____ Date: _____

Thesis Tentative Title: _____

COMPOSITION OF THESIS EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

This is: ____ New ____ Amended composition for the committee.

For a new committee, submit this form by the Add Date of the Fall term (Year One for Fifth Year Masters, Year Two for Traditional Masters). You may also submit this form at any time to change the membership of your thesis committee.

Committee Member * _____ Thesis Advisor

Committee Member * _____ Thesis Chair

Committee Member * _____

Committee Member _____ (Optional)

*required EAPS members of the committee. The chair and the majority of the committee should be EAPS faculty.

If your optional committee member is external to MIT, please provide their Title, affiliation, and preferred contact email of member outside of EAPS/MIT:

Please include a brief abstract (if you need to attach a separate word doc, please feel free to do so).

APPENDIX F: PHD DEFENSE SCHEDULING FORM



Massachusetts Institute of Technology
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Building 54-918
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

Education Office
617-253-3380
eaps.mit.edu

PhD Thesis Defense Scheduling Form

*This form must be submitted to the department Education Office, 54-912,
at least 2 weeks prior to the defense.*

NOTICE

Doctoral Dissertation Defense of Thesis Entitled:

by:

A public presentation of the thesis will be given by the candidate.

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

PREFERRED PLACE: _____

CHAIR OF THE DEFENSE: _____
(Prof. Name, MIT, EAPS)

THESIS COMMITTEE:
(Prof. Name, MIT, EAPS, Advisor) _____

(Prof./Dr. Name, School/Company) _____

(Prof./Dr. Name, School/Company) _____

(Prof./Dr. Name, School/Company) _____

Copies of the thesis may be obtained from the EAPS Education Office (54-912).

All interested faculty, staff and students are invited to attend.

*We certify that each thesis committee member has received a draft of the complete thesis and
has approved the scheduling of a formal defense.*

Advisor Name

Advisor Signature

Date

APPENDIX G: SM DEFENSE SCHEDULING FORM



Massachusetts Institute of Technology
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Building 54-918
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

617-253-2127
eapsweb.mit.edu

SM Thesis Defense Scheduling Form

*This form must be submitted to the department Education Office, 54-912,
at least 2 weeks prior to the defense.*

NOTICE

Masters Defense of Thesis Entitled:

by:

A public presentation of the thesis will be given by the candidate. Yes____ No____

Private defense information:

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

Location Request: _____

CHAIR OF THE DEFENSE:

(Prof. Name, MIT, EAPS) _____

THESIS COMMITTEE:

(Prof. Name, MIT, EAPS, Advisor) _____

(Prof. Name, MIT EAPS) _____

(Prof. Name, MIT EAPS) _____

Copies of the thesis may be obtained from the EAPS Education Office (54-912).

All interested faculty, staff and students are invited to attend a public presentation, if the masters student chooses to hold one (not required for the Masters defense).

We certify that each thesis committee member has received a draft of the complete thesis and has approved the scheduling of a formal defense.

Advisor Name

Advisor Signature

Date

APPENDIX H: EXTENSION FORM



Massachusetts Institute of Technology
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Building 54-918
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

Education Office
617-253-3380
eaps.mit.edu

Request for Extension

PhD students extending beyond the fifth year, 5th-year SM students extending beyond, their 2nd term or traditional SM students extending beyond their 4th term, please complete this form for submission to the Committee on Education Program.

STUDENT INFORMATION:

Student Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Primary Advisor: _____

Date Submitted: _____

1. Please explain your reasons for requesting the extension (required):

2. Please provide a brief plan and timeline for completing your degree, including the expected month/year of your defense.

Primary Advisor's Comments (required):

Student Signature Date

Primary Advisor Signature Date

Last Edited: May 21, 2024

APPENDIX I: DEPARTMENTAL CONTACTS

EAPS Education Office

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General mailbox: eaps-ed-office@mit.edu

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