

Pursuing an internship while in the Joint Program

The MIT-WHOI Joint Program (JP) recognizes the benefits of exploring career opportunities through taking an internship during one or more terms. To do this requires that the student not enroll for the full term(s) in which they intend to pursue an internship (summer, fall, or spring). Several JP students have done this – most during the summer, some during the fall or spring. Students should discuss such plans with their advisor(s). MIT guidance on this can be found at: <https://oge.mit.edu/gpp/assistance/employment/>.

The time that a student is away will not be included in the calculation of time to degree – e.g., if a three-month summer term is taken, the end date of five years in the program will be November 30 instead of August 31 of the fifth year; if a 4.5-month term is taken, the end date of five years in the program will be January 15 instead of August 31 of the fifth year.

With regard to the section in the MIT policy and procedure above, “In particular, please note that a graduate student who wishes to suspend work on a degree to accept an offer of employment or hold an employment position while pursuing a graduate degree with an employer other than MIT, Lincoln Laboratory, or the Charles Stark Draper Laboratory, should consult their department or program administration regarding the correct approval procedures.” MIT-WHOI JP approval procedures are as follows:

First, discuss with your advisor. Then, send a brief memo/email to the appropriate Joint Committee, copying the WHOI Associate Dean, that includes a description of the internship, the training benefits the student hopes to obtain, and the term during which the internship will be conducted. The advisor should send also an email or brief memo approving the plan, including the relevance of the plan to possible career goals. Additional policies and guidelines are listed below:

1. If the internship will be during summer term, the student simply does not enroll for the summer term. If for fall or spring term, or for more than one term, the student needs to withdraw and then apply for readmission - a formality as long as the JC approves prior to withdrawing; see <https://oge.mit.edu/gpp/registration/changes/withdrawal-readmission/>. Please note that it is necessary to take off the full term. MIT does not allow a student to be enrolled for just part of a term. (It may be possible for the advisor to hire the student as a casual employee for time when the student is not enrolled and also not doing an internship, but that is up to the student and advisor).
2. The student must make sure that the thesis committee is aware of these plans and reasons for pursuing an internship.
3. As noted in the MIT policies and procedures, “a fellowship student who holds a full-time paid internship over the summer may be asked to forfeit their summer fellowship stipend. The student should check with their department and with the Graduate Fellowships Manager to ensure compliance with the terms of their particular fellowship.”

4. As noted in the MIT policies and procedures, the student must check that there is no conflict of interest and conflict of commitment.
5. International students will need to check regulations for international students' on and off-campus work (e.g., engaging in a paid internship may not be allowed depending on the student's visa status).
6. If living in MIT housing, the student would need to alert MIT housing to determine how to manage their existing housing contract; they cannot continue to live in MIT housing during the semester in which they are not enrolled. Students must contact Housing **at least** 30 days prior to their preferred contract end date to determine a move out date, or steps to sublicense their campus housing. More information can be found here: <http://studentlife.mit.edu/housing/graduate-family-housing/moving-out> and here: <http://studentlife.mit.edu/housing/student-policies/sublicensing>
7. Once approved to pursue an internship by the Joint Committee, the student must notify the Academic Programs Office and the MIT JP Office.