

Preparing to Defend and Graduate from the JP

October 2024



Overarching Advice

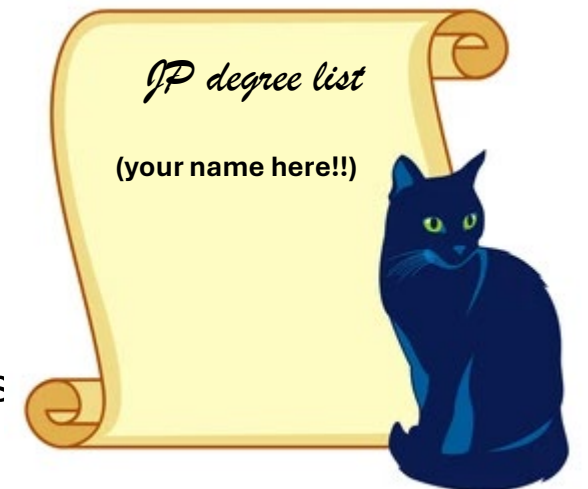
- Follow the directions in your handbook and from your home department (particularly important for AOSE students).
- When reaching out to your home MIT department with questions, **cc someone in JP administration** (e.g., Tricia N. or Ann).
- It is very helpful to look at previous theses as examples.
- If you don't know, ask.
- Don't panic.



- Much of what you need to know is here:
<https://mit.whoie.edu/academics/thesis/>
- The information from this presentation is contained within that page. There are also topics we didn't cover (e.g., ordering thesis copies, checkout procedures, publisher policies)

Early in the Semester

- Complete the online degree application (degree list) in WebSiS, even if you aren't sure if you will defend (it's free to sign up early, and easy to drop off the list).
 - You must sign up by the Registration Deadline (first Friday of the term) of the semester in which you plan to graduate
 - You will need to provide a thesis title as part of the Online Degree Application. It's ok to guess at the title, but you will need to update it to EXACTLY what is on your physical thesis (usually approx. 30 days before the thesis due date on the MIT Academic Calendar) .
 - Let Tricia N. know if you have any small title changes after the deadline.
 - You will be asked to indicate your Commencement plans & post-graduate mailing address. You can always log in and change these later (or contact the Registrar's Office to make updates)



While you're at it...

This is a good time to sign up for an [Infinite Connection](#) (alumni) account

- Your MIT student email expires the January following your graduation
- Your WHOI email expires 6 months after you check out.



Setting a date and finding a Chair

- Work with your committee to get authorization to defend (they may require a “green light meeting) and set a date.
- Once you have a date, let us (Tricia N., Ann, & Keqi) know what it is asap, even if you don’t have any of the other details worked out.
- Identify a Chair for your defense and let us know who it is. The Chair should be a member of the JP faculty who is NOT a member of your thesis committee. Keqi sends the Chair some directions.



Arranging your defense

- Reserve room(s) for your public and private defense. Let us know if you need help. Allow a lot of time:
 - ~2 hours for public, including 30 min for setup
 - 2 hours for private...doesn't usually take that long but the room shouldn't be the limiting factor.

Arranging your defense

- Create two zoom meetings(s) using MIT's Zoom site: <http://ist.mit.edu/zoom> requiring registration for the public defense.
- Share the links with your committee.
- You may want to have your Defense Chair set up the link for the private meeting.
 - MechE requires that if you have committee members participating virtually, that someone else set up the link for the private defense.

At Least two weeks ahead of time

- Provide committee with your defensible draft (some disciplines may require more time, e.g., MGG 3 weeks)
- Submit the [Doctoral Thesis Notice Form](#), abstract and defensible draft to Keqi Ren and Tricia Nesti. See your handbook for additional guidelines.

Some required info: thesis title, committee names, zoom link (with registration required), and advisor signature.

We use this to create the defense announcement, so it is helpful to have the information early (even without the signature and actual thesis).

Before the defense

- Meet with your Chair and talk through the logistics (e.g., confirm that the schedule is ok, figure out who will set up the call for the private defense, etc).
- Decide how questions will be handled during the public defense (e.g., who will monitor zoom).
- Practice in the room where you will be speaking.
- AV help:
 - At WHOI submit a ticket to IS (well in advance).
 - At MIT contact Tricia and Geoff (at least a week in advance).

Reimbursement for committee member travel

- Reasonable costs for one outside member of your committee can be reimbursed.
- The policy is [here](#).

After the defense

- Committee decides on revisions. Two weeks is standard, but sometimes students are given longer.
- You should not plan travel/vacation during this period, and ideally should give yourself some buffer time in case more extensive revisions are needed.



Oh yeah...the thesis

- Formatting guidelines are here:

[MIT Thesis Specifications](#)

[Joint Program Thesis Specifications](#) – *this document is something of a “one-stop shop”. Look here first for JP information as well as important links to your home department and MIT specifications, as well as any/all thesis-related steps (like your Online Degree Application!)*

- Pay particular attention to pagination and spacing instructions, as well as formatting of the title page. If you have questions, ask.
 - We have Title and Abstract page templates for your use to help with this part of the process. You can find them on this page: <https://mit.who.edu/academics/thesis/>.
- You should plan at least 24 – 48 hours for formatting revisions
 - Submitting your thesis the day it’s due at 3pm doesn’t allow enough time for review of formatting, and any time you may need to make corrections, which happens often!

Signatures

- Your title page needs to be signed by your advisor and JC Chair (and anyone else required by your home department). Signatures are via DocuSign. Directions are [here](#).
- MIT departments vary in their requirements (e.g., some require INK)...check with your home department for the most recent requirements.
 - Even if your home department doesn't require DocuSign, the JP does, and you will need to complete the process.
- JP requires an unsigned version of your full thesis and a signed (DocuSign) version of your title page.

Our Current Understanding of MIT Department Policy on Thesis Signatures (Nov 2023)

- EAPS – (Grad Admin Ann Greaney-Williams) “All "signatures" will be handled digitally by the Education Office. You are not responsible for acquiring signatures from your advisor or the Department Head.” (<https://eapsweb.mit.edu/academic-resources/thesis-submission>)
- MechE – Utilizes email from advisor to the Graduate Administrator (Saana McDanie) (<https://mechegrad.mit.edu/thesis-submission-2/> under Step Three)
- CEE – (Grad Admin Sarah Smith) students turn in two copies of their thesis, one with a signed title page, and one without.
- EECS – Utilizes email from advisor to the Graduate Administrator (Meredith Bittrich) (<https://www.eecs.mit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2023-thesis-submissions.pdf>)
- AeroAstro – (Grad Admins Rachael Draper and Erinn Barroso) email the Thesis Committee members and Dept Chair, who respond via email with their confirmation. No signatures, but they’re looking to overhaul this process (possibly with a form that the student routes through DocuSign).
- Biology – (Grad Admin Janice Chang) separate from the thesis that they submit, students submit a title page with signatures.

In all cases the Joint Program requires that the student collect signatures of their advisor and JC Chair via DocuSign. Any requirements above would be *in addition to* JP requirements.

Student Accounts

- The JP funds your tuition, stipend and health insurance. Some funding awards (like NSF GRFP) include your student life fee.
 - Otherwise, any charges (late fees, student life fee, etc.) are the student's responsibility to clear before they're able to graduate
- Sometimes students on the degree list see a charge for the upcoming semester. The Registrar's system doesn't always "talk" to SFS' in the most timely manner.
 - If you know you will be graduating and still see a bill for the upcoming semester, don't worry. Just let us know, so we can ask the Registrar's office to update your record.
 - If you see a health insurance charge for the upcoming semester, you will need to contact MIT Medical directly; they will confirm with the Registrar's Office that you're graduating.

