Graduate Program in Physics at MIT

Numbers

77  Faculty
600 Applications per year
100 Offered Admission
43 Accept -> 43% yield
5.6 Average Years to a PhD
~3 Student/Faculty
Graduate Program in Physics at MIT
Program Review

We carried out a thorough review of all aspects of our graduate program in 2001.

No major changes were made; rather there was a fair amount of “fine tuning”.

In particular, the structure of the General Exam remained the same. The students on the committee supported this.
Graduate Program in Physics at MIT
Course Requirements

2 Subjects in one’s research area
2 Breadth subjects
Graduate Program in Physics at MIT
General Exam

Part I, Written, 5 hours
20 short problems on undergraduate material
3 tries, then a special oral if one fails last try
Graduate Program in Physics at MIT

General Exam

Part II, Written, 5 hours

4 problems in 4 separate areas
   Classical, QM, E&M, Statistical and Thermo.

Choose 1 of 2 in each area

2 tries, then special oral if one fails last try
Graduate Program in Physics at MIT
General Exam

Part III, Oral, ~1.5 hours

In general (not specific) area of research

One committee of 3 faculty for all in given area
Graduate Program in Physics at MIT

Attrition

We lose about 4% of our students due to the General Exams and about 14% for other reasons. This sums to an attrition rate of about 18%. About half of these leave with a Master’s Degree
Graduate Program in Physics at MIT
Thesis and Graduation

Average time to a Ph.D. is 5.6 years.
Graduate Program in Physics at MIT
The Complete Story

Guidelines for Physics Doctoral Candidates
http://web.mit.edu/physics/graduate/current/curdocguide.html

Graduate Education in Physics: Which Way Forward?
February 1, 2008