

Quick Guide to the Structure of the PhD Program

The Doctoral Qualifying Field Evaluation:

- Process must be initiated by Reg Day of the 3rd regular semester and completed by the end of the same semester.
- Students must pass three courses from the Field Subject List of their choice with grades of no less than A, A, B
- Completion of process requires signature from a faculty member who can advise the PhD and minimum 4.4 GPA

The Doctoral Committee:

- At least one AeroAstro faculty member, and one additional faculty member from MIT
- At least 3 members total: faculty or recognized experts in the research field
- Formed not more than 2 regular semesters after the start of the PhD

The Major Field of Study:

- At least 5 subjects in a proposed field of study
- Approved by student's doctoral committee

The Minor Program of Study:

- 30 units (typically 3 subjects) in technical subjects related to AeroAstro and sufficiently different from the major field
- Approved by student's doctoral committee

The Math Requirement:

- At least 24 units (2 subjects) in graduate level course 18 subjects or subjects in the approved math requirement list

Research Process & Communication Subject (RPC):

- Required by all students admitted to the PhD
- Must be taken and passed before Thesis Proposal Defense (two cannot be done simultaneously)
- Offered both Fall and Spring semester

The Thesis Proposal Defense:

- Scheduled no later than 3 regular semester after the start of the PhD
- RPC Course must be completed and passed before proposal defense may be scheduled
- External evaluator: a faculty or recognized expert on the research field
- Department representative generally an AeroAstro member of the committee. A representative external to the committee could be assigned, if requested.
- Structure:
 - o Discussion of written document and agreement (or not) to proceed (student should not be present)
 - o 30 minute presentation followed by ~30 minute Q&A
 - o Committee deliberation and outcome decision (student not present during deliberation)

The Thesis Defense:

- Scheduled no later than 4 regular semesters after passing the thesis proposal defense
- Two thesis readers: faculty or recognized experts in the research field not already on the doctoral committee
- Department representative generally an AeroAstro member of the committee. A representative external to the committee could be assigned, if requested.
- Structure:
 - o 60 minute presentation followed by ~30 minute Q&A
 - o Committee deliberation and decision outcome communicated to the student (student not present during deliberation)