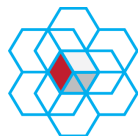


3.998 Doctoral Thesis Update Meeting

AY2026-2027



DEPARTMENT OF
MATERIALS SCIENCE
& ENGINEERING

3.998 Doctoral Thesis Update Meeting Guidelines: 3.998 Doctoral Thesis Update Meeting is a Ph.D. milestone in DMSE, intended as an opportunity to interact further with your committee members, to get feedback on the research that is carried out, and on future plans. Our students usually take this in the Fall or Spring of their 3rd year, however, it can also be taken in your 4th year on agreement with your advisor(s).

Format of the meeting: We encourage you to talk with your advisor(s) at the beginning of the semester on the preferred format and timing, to maximize your opportunity to get useful feedback. As a guideline, a format that works well for many of our students is scheduling a 1 hour meeting with 30 minutes of presentation by the student followed by 30 minutes of questions/suggestions from the committee. You can propose a longer meeting if needed.

What the presentation should include: The purpose of this meeting is to update your thesis committee on your PhD plans and progress to be able to get critical feedback. It is primarily meant as a forum to get advice on your thesis direction and not as a test. Starting with your TAE or PPSM proposal as a point of departure, you may begin by reminding the committee about the scientific question(s) you work towards answering in your PhD. From there, you may present the path you are taking to answer the identified questions, your current results, your future steps, as well as the envisioned challenges and obstacles. You may also discuss classes you took or plan on taking, as well as a timeline for the remainder of your PhD. Make sure to maximize the time spent discussing topics you need the most critical feedback from. After this meeting, if needed, you can also set follow-up meetings with committee members to get further feedback.

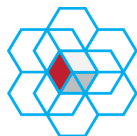
How to organize the meeting: The first step is to register for 3.998 Doctoral Thesis Update meeting (1 unit class) in the semester you wish to conduct your update meeting. Then, we advise you to schedule a meeting with your advisor(s) to talk through preparation for the update meeting and a particular time in the future you will be ready to take it. In some groups, students practice their update presentations within their group first. All students must reach out to their own committee members to organize the meeting for a time agreed by their advisor(s). After the meeting, students are required to submit a 3.998 Doctoral Thesis Update form to the Department which must be signed by all committee members.

Tips on contacting your committee: We recommend students contact their committee members at least 2 months in advance of when they plan to have the update meeting. Usually our students have success doing this via email, cc'ing the administrative assistant of the committee member in question. Students have also had success in the past organizing this with calendar apps such as when2meet or Doodle polls. Give your committee a range of options of potential dates/times to aid in planning a time that works for everyone. Meetings should not be scheduled on Institute and Student holidays. Some of our students find that their committee members can be hard to reach - this is normal. If you are having trouble getting a response from a committee member after 2 attempts at contact (initial email, one reminder email a week later, wait one more week) then please reach out to the DMSE Graduate Academic Office (dmse-gradoffice@mit.edu) cc'ing your advisor(s) and we will aid you in contacting your committee.

How the grading works: The grading option for 3.998 is P/D/F, however this is not seen as an exam. The purpose of the Doctoral Thesis Update Meeting is to help you communicate with your committee and aid you in performing impactful and creative work. Use it as an opportunity to get feedback and to critically think about your current work and future research direction.

This 3.998 Doctoral Thesis Update Meeting form is due by the last day of class of the term.

3.998 Doctoral Thesis Update Meeting AY2026-2027



DMSE

DEPARTMENT OF
MATERIALS SCIENCE
& ENGINEERING

Contact Information

Name: _____

Email: _____ @mit.edu

Meeting Information

Term: (select) ☐ Fall 2026 ☐ Spring 2027

Date: _____

Time: _____

Room: _____

Virtual Meeting Link: _____

(add room if applicable or type n/a)

(add link if applicable or type n/a)

Thesis Committee Members (Print Name)

Signature

Date

Committee Member

Committee Member

Committee Member

If applicable, select: ☐ Co-Advisor ☐ Thesis Reader

Thesis Advisor

3.998 Doctoral Thesis Update Meeting Result (certified by the Thesis Advisor)

☐ Pass (P) ☐ Minimal Acceptance Performance (D)

☐ Fail (F) ☐ Incomplete (I) ***only applicable if the student registered for 3.998 but meeting was not held*

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last day of class of the term.**