

Reports to the President Preparation Guidelines

The essentials for preparing your report, from content to formatting to submission

Quick start

Reports are due on Friday, August 9, 2024. *Remember that your report covers the period from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.* Don't include information about prior years unless it's pertinent to the present year, and avoid repeating information presented in prior years' reports. Don't include descriptions of events occurring on or after July 1, 2024; if you absolutely must mention future events, do so sparingly and be brief.

If you've done this before, you can use last year's report as a model. Take a look at the reports of other departments, labs, centers, and institutes (DLCIs) reports, especially from areas similar to your own. You might find an idea worth emulating.

If you're new to this exercise or need a refresher, our content guidelines identify the types of information that are considered essential for preserving the continuity of MIT's historical record.

- Write for a non-MIT audience. Spell out acronyms, especially those unique to MIT.
- Make sure your story will be understood by future readers. Think about what's important to preserve for the Institute's historical memory. Write your report as if you're reading it 10 or 20 years from now. Have you concluded the story about the important organizational undertaking or academic changes that you wrote about in prior reports? Don't leave important, multiyear narratives incomplete. Even if the outcome isn't entirely positive or didn't yield the anticipated results, it's important to include it in the historical record.
- Above all, be concise!

Content guidelines

Relevant information in all reports

- **Current goals, objectives, priorities.** Have they changed since last year's report? Also, if relevant, please gauge the impact of Institute-wide policies, recommendations, activities, or events; the impact of social or cultural policies and events—national and international—also may be considered.
- **Accomplishments.** Major accomplishments in new or ongoing programs (don't repeat last year's accomplishments); significant anniversaries; special projects, including lectures, exhibitions, concerts, and events.

- **Administrative initiatives.** New procedures, processes, or policies; new or changing areas of responsibility; collaborative activity with other departments and offices; committee work and its results (include the name of the final report when issued); new equipment, tools, or instruments, or new applications for same; physical movement into and out of particular locations, and its impact on the work or program.
- **Finances and funding.** Major donations and bequests; new grants, fellowships, internships; other financial assistance.
- **Personnel information.** Appointments, promotions, departures, and retirements (with brief reflections on tenure/stewardship); leaves; awards and honors; significant professional activities and publications, or involvement in special projects or programs.

Additional information from academic or research units

- **Teaching and curriculum.** Changes in the curriculum; current impact of educational trends.
- **Research activities.** Review of current major projects—their purpose, parameters, participants, and funding sources; important findings, inventions, or product breakthroughs. Provide a brief summary rather than extensive details. If a faculty member's section looks like their CV, you've included too much.

What's new for 2024?

Copyediting

Please copy edit your report before you submit it: Your report will be posted as is. Take time to unify the voice and ensure that it doesn't read as if it were written by several different people. Please use the Reports to the President [Style Sheet](#) to help keep your report consistent.

Formatting and other tips

It's very important to use headings to format your report—they're key to making it accessible to users of assistive technologies.

Headings

Please use Microsoft Word's basic styles to format your document. For example, use Heading 1, Heading 2, and so on for headings, and Normal for the body text. Don't include running heads, footers, or page numbers in your document.

Fonts

Please use one of the fonts that comes standard with your computer's operating system (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, Aptos). Make your body text 11 pt or 12 pt.

Tables, charts, photos, and other graphics

Please review MIT's [accessibility](#) guidelines before preparing your report, and follow the guidelines for making graphic elements accessible.

Include only those tables, charts, photos, or other graphics that are necessary to your report and that expand upon the text. For example, don't include a table that summarizes all the data outlined in the text: choose one or the other. Ensure that the labels make sense and are legible, and double-check your calculations.

Tables

All tables and graphics should have a title and, if appropriate, a source (e.g., photo credit). If your graphic has already been published elsewhere, be sure to cite the source and obtain permission to reproduce it, if necessary.

Tables can be difficult to make accessible. If you must include tables, create them in your word processing program and apply the appropriate settings to the header, rows, and footer.

If your report contains more than five tables, number them (e.g., Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, etc.).

Don't use spaces or empty columns or rows to format your tables.

If your table shows annual data, include no more than five years of data.

Charts and photos

Charts, especially those created in Microsoft Excel, can be embedded in your MS Word doc.

Submission guidelines

Beginning in 2024, reports to the president should be submitted to the MIT Libraries in PDF/A format. Your document should be prepared as a single file, incorporating any graphics/images and their appropriate alt text and captions. *More details and a checklist for creating a PDF/A for submission will be provided closer to the deadline.*

Naming your file

For easy identification, please use a filename that includes your unit's name or acronym using the following format: **DLCIname-annualreport-YYYY.pdf**. For example, the filename for the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science's report would be EECS-annualreport-2024.pdf. Please be sure to use just the terminal year of the reporting period (i.e., 2024, not 2023-2024).

Questions?

Email reports@mit.edu.

From other docs:

Spacing

Use a line spacing that is comfortable for the reader, leaving a space between paragraphs. If spacing between paragraphs, you don't need to indent the first line of each paragraph.

Pagination

Your report doesn't require a separate title page. Include page numbers at the bottom of your report (including page 1), and make sure that your final document's pagination is sequential.

Headings

Format/tag your report title as Heading 1 (H1) and format/tag subsequent sections in the appropriate hierarchical order (H2, H3, H4), ensuring that the content is nested and flows logically.