

## Introduction

Following the recommendations from the [Graduate Student Housing Working Group's Report to the Chancellor \(August 2018\)](#), Housing & Residential Services (HRS) continues its work to improve MIT's graduate student residential experience. The Graduate Housing Working Group (GHWG) was formed in accordance with the [2018 Graduate Student Housing Working Group Report recommendation](#).

Given the progress made in expanding graduate housing capacity to exceed the 950-bed [Volpe commitment to the City of Cambridge](#) and the close collaborative work to open the Graduate Junction and Graduate Tower at Site 4 residences, the Graduate Housing Working Group's intensive efforts have yielded successful outcomes. The Graduate Housing Working Group has now turned its efforts toward advising Housing & Residential Services as it considers refinements to the graduate housing system - reflected in its new name, the Graduate Housing Advisory Committee (GHAC).

The Advisory Committee provided important guidance in the past year, with several improvements made to services for residents, including:

- The opening of the 675-bed [Graduate Junction](#) residence.
- Updates to the StarRez housing portal for easier renewal and self-selection.
- Updated website containing all graduate housing information.
- Targeted staffing improvements to handle peak periods in housing processes.

HRS remains committed to engaging with the GHAC, graduate house leadership, and graduate students to continue meeting the needs of residents.

## Charge

The Graduate Housing Advisory Committee (GHAC) brings together stakeholders from across campus to ensure that the Institute is meeting the housing needs of the graduate students. The aim of the Advisory Committee is to analyze and report on major forces impacting the supply and availability of graduate student housing in the Greater Cambridge area while also assessing demand for different types of on-campus housing options. In addition, the Advisory Committee provides advice and insights about long-term and strategic housing priorities, including major on-campus graduate housing projects such as the recently opened Graduate Junction, and provides insight into current processes for selecting housing.

## GHAC Areas of Focus (AY2025)

- Continue to examine ways to optimize occupancy
- 2025 Graduate Housing Student Survey
- On-campus housing rate-setting process
- Graduate Junction report-ins and analysis
- Longer-range needs related to housing undergraduates within graduate housing, and planning for Westgate and Tang
- Continual improvement to the StarRez user experience

## AY25 Membership

### *Conveners*

David Friedrich, *Senior Associate Dean for Housing & Residential Services*

Russ Chua, *GSC HCA Chair*

Nicholas King, *GSC HCA Chair*

### *Faculty and Administrators*

Dan Hastings, *Interim Vice Chancellor*

Suzy Nelson, *Vice Chancellor for Student Life*

Brent Ryan, *Vice Provost and Associate Professor, DUSP*

David Darmofal, *Head of House Convener*

Eva Dessenin, *Graduate Head of House*

Denzil Streete, *Senior Assoc. Dean & Director, OGE*

### *Graduate Student Council (GSC) Officer Liaison and Representatives*

Teddy Warner, *GSC President*

Adina Bechhofer, *Off-Campus representative*

Naomi Schurr, *On-Campus resident (Tang Hall)*

### *Staff to the Committee*

Peter Cummings, *Executive Director for Administration, Office of the Dean for Student Life*

John McDonald, *Director, DSL Business Services & Technology*

Ashley Kennedy, *Director of Communications & Marketing, HRS*

Rich Hilton, *Assoc. Dean/Director of Residential Services & Operations, HRS*

Paul Villemare, *Associate Director of Residential Services, HRS*

Milo Alto, *Manager of Special Projects, HRS*

# Integrating Graduate Junction

**(previously known as the West Campus Graduate Housing Development)**

Beginning in March 2020, MIT entered into agreements with American Campus Communities (ACC) to develop and manage the West Campus Graduate Housing Development. With its opening in August 2024, [Graduate Junction](#) added approximately 675 additional beds to the MIT graduate housing system, helping the Institute exceed its original 950-bed commitment in the Volpe Agreement with the City of Cambridge by adding 1,075 new beds. The residence features 350 apartments, comprising a mix of studios, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and four-bedroom units, catering to graduate students, including those with children.

## Pre-opening planning and onboarding

Ahead of the building's opening, the Graduate Housing Advisory Committee (GHAC) was briefed on the extensive planning and onboarding efforts that prepared ACC staff to welcome and support residents. These efforts included the development of key governance documents—such as the operating matrix, emergency matrix, resident handbook, and operations manual—to guide daily operations and align with Institute policies.

ACC staff were also introduced to MIT offices that provide essential operational and community support, including Residential & Community Life, the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (OSCCS), the MIT Police Department, and the CARE Team. In addition, Housing & Residential Services (HRS) worked closely with ACC to coordinate housing transitions for residents moving into Graduate Junction, bridging the period between the July 31 license termination date and the August 21 opening of the new facility.

## Opening Celebration, Community Events, and Building Operations

The American Campus Communities (ACC) team invited the GHAC, the Graduate Junction community, and campus collaborators to [celebrate the grand opening of Graduate Junction](#) in November 2024. In addition to this community event, GHAC heard from ACC about efforts to build community in the building with various resident events and gatherings, including free farmers markets, trick-or-treating for children, movie nights, and resident breakfasts. GHAC received updates from ACC on building operations, maintenance progress, and resident experience, including efforts to close out the construction punch list.

# Enhancements to Graduate Housing

## Renewal Process Simplification

The renewal process can be confusing for residents, as different license types have varying rules for renewal. Housing & Residential Services redesigned the renewal process to better guide residents through their options in the application, reducing the need for residents to refer to external instructions for renewal or termination.

## Self-selection Dates and Process

Coordination between HRS and ACC on licensing dates and deadlines aimed to provide earlier timelines for graduate housing selection to help maximize time to fill the expanded capacity of the housing system. The GHAC provided input on the timeline, which moved the renewal and termination process for existing graduate students into March and opened the licensing period to current Graduate students in late April.

## Self-selection Application and Lottery

As part of an ongoing effort to improve MIT's residential system, HRS continued working with house teams and student leaders to enhance graduate housing processes and technology. With StarRez and the self-selection processes implemented, improvements were tested and launched in the spring of 2024 to ensure system stability and a positive user experience.

In previous years, the demand for graduate housing during early self-selection windows caused the StarRez portal to reach the limit of consecutive users and resulted in student frustration. With input from the GHAC and graduate student leaders, HRS continued the application and lottery system for the 2025-2026 housing cycle to first gauge the demand for housing and then allocate lottery time slots to manage the flow of students through the self-selection process.

The application asked about family status and encouraged individual students to complete a roommate profile. It was available to students after the April 15 new student response deadline and remained open for two weeks. Once the deadline passed, students were entered into a lottery and randomly assigned a date and time window for self-selection participation. This change to the process successfully reduced the number of concurrent users in the StarRez portal and allowed for a smoother process for all involved. The StarRez portal performed extremely well for the 2025-2026 housing selection, and there were no system-related concerns reported by students looking for housing.

# Graduate Housing Survey Data

In Spring 2025, the Advisory Committee reviewed responses to the 2025 Graduate House Life Survey (Total Invited = 6,965; Response Rate = 16%; N = 1,112) to examine findings, including results for on-campus and MIT-affiliated residences.

## Overall Satisfaction

Respondents reported a notable increase in satisfaction with their housing situation. In 2024, 70% of respondents reported being somewhat or very satisfied with their housing situation, and this increased to 81% of respondents in 2025. Additionally, 70% of respondents reported that they plan to stay in their current MIT-operated on-campus residence for the duration of their academic program.

## Housing Selection Factors

Respondents were asked to rate (on a scale from 1 *Not at all Important* - 10 *Very Important*) the importance of a variety of housing-related factors when selecting their residence, including value, social scene, and building amenities outside of their room. Among on-campus and MIT-affiliated graduate housing, respondents rated cost (mean = 8.9), location (mean = 8.4), and unit types available within residence (mean = 8.1)/value (mean = 8.1) as the most important factors when selecting their residence. Roommate compatibility (mean = 5.5), friends in residence (mean = 4.7), and social scene (4.7) received the lowest ratings.

## Operations and Facilities

When asked to rate the common spaces in residences, respondents had generally positive feedback. Respondents reported that common restrooms are kept clean (85%) and that shared areas such as lounges and kitchens are also kept clean (80%). Satisfaction levels were also strong for facilities request response times: approximately three-quarters of respondents were satisfied with responses during regular business hours (76%) as well as after-hours and on weekends (69%).

## Residential Community & Belonging

Survey results show that many residents are forming meaningful connections and engaging with their communities: 67% of respondents reported having friends where they live, 63% felt welcomed when they first arrived, and 57% said their residence offers events they are interested in attending. About half reported feeling connected to their residence (50%) and a sense of community and belonging (46%). Engagement remains strong, with 61% of respondents attending house events during the year, and 48% feeling comfortable approaching someone in their residence for advice about an academic or personal concern. Together, these findings reflect a community where many students are building relationships and actively participating, while also pointing to opportunities to deepen a sense of belonging for all residents.

## Communications and Marketing

With the redevelopment of the Division of Student Life website, all graduate housing content was fully integrated onto the [Graduate Housing](#) website, including information on moving, maintenance and security resources, guest policies, and termination instructions. With the Graduate Housing website in its second year of operation, it is now appropriately featured by search engines and search results have become the largest driver of new users to the website, helping prospective and current residents find the information they need about on-campus housing.

HRS partnered with the Office of Graduate Education (OGE) to promote on-campus housing options to new incoming graduate students. Using the Slate platform, messages were sent on a regular basis directly to new students with information about housing options, processes, and timelines. Additionally, Housing worked closely with the Sloan admissions office to cater housing content towards their audience, who often arrive on campus off-cycle of the traditional fall start. These were fruitful partnerships that helped newly admitted students become familiar with housing options.

## Referral Credit Housing Incentive

HRS developed an incentive program for Fall 2021 to offer current residents the opportunity to refer new residents and receive a financial benefit if the new residents moved into housing. The referrer receives a \$250 rental credit for each successful referral. The referral also receives \$250. The program was first implemented as part of the strategy to recover from elevated Covid-related vacancy in the system. Given the system's expansion with 675 new beds and the importance of attracting more students to live on campus, the [program was implemented for the 2025-2026 academic year](#) with good success. HRS evaluates the program on a year-to-year basis and determines whether it will be offered.

To evaluate the 25-26 program, Housing & Residential Services used marketing metrics to determine which new incoming graduate students had engaged with marketing content and compared that to the referral data. Housing found that 37 successfully referred residents had shown no interactions with direct marketing, making the referrer the most likely reason the referral learned about on-campus housing. This datapoint highlights the program's effectiveness in attracting students who would not have otherwise known about on-campus housing.

## Referral Credit Program by Academic Year

Year	Referrers	Referrals	Total Participants
2021–2022	110	255	365
2022–2023	136	285	421
2023-2024	No referral program offered		
2024-2025	49	115	164
2025-2026	102	188	290

## Graduate Housing Rates

MIT’s approach to rate-setting is informed by the GHAC and current housing market conditions in Boston and Cambridge. A key priority for graduate housing is to provide a range of housing options and price points—single rooms, efficiencies, one-bedroom, and multi-bedroom units—so students can make choices that best fit their circumstances. The Institute has continued its implementation of a process that is aware of the area market in order to consistently keep rates below the market while also ensuring that MIT can operate a quality and financially sustainable housing system. As is the case with any housing system, rate increases are necessary to cover annual increases in operational costs—including livable wages for the hundreds of staff members who help keep 24/7 housing operations running.

MIT continues to make differentiated adjustments to unit types to more consistently meet below-market targets across all unit types. Adjustments are being made over the long term to moderate increases and endeavor to mitigate any significant changes that may occur in the area market.

## FY26 Graduate Housing Rate Increases

Announced January 2025

	Weighted Average % Increase	Weighted Average Rent	% Increase range
FY22	0%	\$1,574	N/A
FY23	3%	\$1,620	1.5% to 5%
FY24	3.5%	\$1,677	1% to 4.75%
FY25	4.75%	\$1,757	2% to 5.35%
FY26	4.25%	\$1,831	2% to 5.75%

MIT recognizes that housing costs comprise the largest single portion of graduate students' budgets, whether they reside on or off campus. The Division of Student Life and the Division of Graduate and Undergraduate Education continue to work closely together to respond to the needs of graduate students as they navigate their MIT experience. MIT provides students with a [variety of additional financial resources](#) such as short- and long-term funding, and grants for graduate students with children.

## Appendix

Table 1 a: All Graduate Housing Occupancy Data

<b>Year (Oct 15)</b>	<b>Graduate Housing Capacity</b>	<b>Total Occupancy</b>	<b>Graduate Students</b>	<b>UG Students</b>	<b>Non-Students (PostDocs/ Visitors, etc.)</b>
2025	3,373	3,207 95%	2,839 89%	105 3%	263 8%
2024	3,375	3,196 95%	2,808 88%	149 5%	239 7%

Table 1 b: On-Campus Residence Occupancy Data

<b>Year (Oct 15)</b>	<b>Graduate Housing Capacity</b>	<b>Total Occupancy</b>	<b>Graduate Students</b>	<b>UG Students</b>	<b>Non-Students (PostDocs/ Visitors, etc.)</b>
2025	2,698	2,549 94%	2,254 88%	105 4%	190 8%
2024	2,700	2,543 94%	2,224 87%	148 6%	171 7%
2023	2,698	2,597 96%	2,311 89%	150 6%	136 5%
2022	2,705	2,507 93%	2,239 89%	54 2%	214 9%
2021	2,705	2,152 80%	1,987 92%	103 5%	62 3%
2020	2,705	1,333 49%	1,300 98%	7 <1%	26 1%
2019	2,453	2,428 99%	2,312 95%	71 3%	45 2%
2018	2,453	2,390 97%	2,190 92%	67 3%	133 5%

Table 1 c: MIT-Affiliated Housing Occupancy Data (Grad Junction)

Year (Oct 15)	Graduate Housing Capacity	Total Occupancy	Graduate Students	UG Students	Non-Students (PostDocs/Visitors, etc.)
2025	675	658 97%	585 89%	0 0%	73 11%
2024	675	652 96%	584 90%	0 0%	68 10%

Table 2: Fall 2025 Graduate Assignments

Fall 2025 Graduate Assignments (as of October 15, 2025)	
Type	2025 Count
Graduate Student Renewal (returning)	1,014
Graduate Student Self-Selection (new)	1,240
Visiting Scholar/Post-Doc Renewal (returning)	32
Visiting Scholar/Post-Doc Self-Selection (new)	158
Undergraduates in Graduate Housing	105
<b>Total Occupancy</b>	<b>2,549</b>
<b>% of Occupancy Design (AY26)</b>	<b>94%</b>