

MAJOR COURSE OF STUDY

Whether or not they enter with plans for a specific field of study, all students are encouraged to examine with an open mind the wide range of Courses (majors) available at the Institute. Students may attend departmental orientation programs to talk with faculty and others with experience in fields of potential interest. They should select electives that will help them think about possible majors. The Independent Activities Period (IAP) (<https://catalog.mit.edu/mit/undergraduate-education/academic-research-options/independent-activities-period>) in January, described later in this section, provides students with opportunities to investigate different fields. For many students, this consideration of fields will reinforce existing convictions, while for others it will open up new avenues of interest. MIT may, however, limit enrollment in particular fields of study to balance resources with student interest.

Each student entering MIT is assigned an advisor who assists the student in designing an effective program of study. The selection of elective subjects is an important consideration, one that students should discuss in depth with their advisors.

All undergraduate degree programs combine the study of basic principles with practical applications. This combination helps to motivate the lifelong learning necessary for professional competence.

Students usually choose a Course (major) at the end of the first year, though they need not do so until the end of the second year. There is sufficient overlap and flexibility so that selection or change of Course can be made with relative ease in the second year.

All undergraduate and graduate academic programs, as well as faculty listings for each of the Institute's departments, are described fully in Schools and College (<https://catalog.mit.edu/schools>) and Interdisciplinary Programs (<https://catalog.mit.edu/interdisciplinary>).

Information on undergraduate registration may be found in Academic Procedures (<https://catalog.mit.edu/mit/procedures>) and Institute Regulations (<https://catalog.mit.edu/mit/regulations>).

Electives

Electives may be used for several different purposes. For example, students who are undecided about their eventual majors may decide to use some portion of their electives to explore the various departments or fields they are considering. Students more certain of their academic and professional goals may choose to use electives to explore areas of secondary interest. Still other students focus first on departmental or General Institute Requirements, deferring subjects of a more supplemental nature until a later year. The study of a language may also be started or continued.

First-year students should select electives that best suit their individual needs. There are several hundred subjects without prerequisites that are especially appropriate for first-year students. However, in general, any subject offered by the Institute is open to all students, provided they satisfy the prerequisites.

Double Majors

Students may earn a bachelor's degree with up to two majors by successfully completing the GIRs and the departmental requirements for each major. To add a second major, a student must apply to the Committee on Curricula (CoC) by Add Date of their penultimate term. Applications submitted after this deadline will be considered by the CoC at its discretion on a case-by-case basis.

A double major program should be completed in eight to 10 academic terms and should be planned in advance. A student's plan for completing both majors must be outlined in the application to the CoC. The application must also include the expected completion date for the degree, and it must be approved by both programs. Students should consult Student Financial Services regarding any impact that pursuing a double major might have on their eligibility for MIT or federal financial aid, particularly if they anticipate needing more than eight semesters to complete their studies.

Students must select a second major in a different area from the primary major. Students pursuing a double major may also complete up to two minors, but a minor may not be taken in the same area as either of the major programs.

Only registered undergraduates who have completed at least three terms at MIT, including at least one term with a declared major, may apply. Transfer students must complete at least two terms at MIT, including at least one term with a declared major. Students with cumulative averages below 4.0 will be considered by the CoC on a case-by-case basis. A student who has previously earned a bachelor's degree with a single major may not return to complete a second major.

For details on eligibility, deadlines, and procedures for double majors (<https://registrar.mit.edu/registration-academics/academic-requirements/majors-minors/double-majors>), see the CoC website.