Communication Requirement

The Communication Requirement makes the development of effective writing and speaking an integral part of undergraduate education at the Institute. The Communication Requirement ensures that all undergraduates receive substantial instruction and practice in general expository writing and speaking and the forms of discourse common to their professional fields.

The Communication Requirement consists of four communication-intensive (CI) subjects sequenced throughout a student’s undergraduate career. Students take two CI subjects in the humanities, arts, and social sciences (CI-H) and two CI subjects in their major program (CI-M). Students must maintain a minimum pace in completing their CI subjects in order to remain in good standing with the Communication Requirement. They must complete one of their CI subjects by the end of the first year, two by the end of the second year, three by the end of the third year, and four by graduation.

Students must earn a passing grade to receive CI credit, and CI subjects must be taken for a letter grade. Therefore, students may not use their junior-senior P/D/F option for these subjects. Only one CI-H subject per term may be counted toward completion of the Communication Requirement. However, students may receive credit for more than one CI-M subject in the same term or a CI-H and a CI-M completed concurrently.

More information on CI-H subjects is included in the section of the Bulletin on the HASS Requirement. Specifics on the CI-M subjects for each major appear in the descriptions of the individual undergraduate degree programs. Additional information can be found on the Communication Requirement website.

The general structure of the Requirement is described below.

First year. Students must pass one CI-H or CI-HW subject (https://registrar.mit.edu/registration-academics/academic-requirements/communication-requirement/ci-hhw-subjects) by the end of their second term at the Institute.

Before entering MIT, all students are asked to take the First-year Essay Evaluation (FEE). The FEE is a placement tool used to determine the best program for each undergraduate within the Communication Requirement. Students who receive a score of “CI-H/CI-HW Required” on the FEE or receive a score of 5 on either the Advanced Placement Language and Composition Test or the Advanced Placement Literature and Composition Test or receive a score of 7 on the English A or B Higher-Level International Baccalaureate (IB) exam have the option of taking any CI-H subject, including a writing-focused CI-H subject (CI-HW).