The Center for International Studies (CIS) supports and promotes international research and education at MIT.

The heart of CIS is its research community of faculty, scholars, and visiting fellows. We aim to produce new knowledge and expertise that creatively address global issues. This work is used to inform public opinion, government decision makers, international organizations, and the MIT community. The center’s programs, projects, and the individual output from our members are reflected worldwide through research, publications, education, public outreach, and engagement with the media. The center also provides many services to MIT students, including internships, fellowships, working groups, program support, and help with finding resources for research.

Within CIS is the MIT Security Studies Program (SSP), a graduate-level research and educational program. SSP’s teaching ties are with the Department of Political Science. Courses offered emphasize grand strategy, the causes and prevention of international and civil conflict, military technology, nuclear proliferation, bureaucratic politics, national security, budgetary issues, and security issues in Asia. A special feature of the program is the integration of knowledge on technology with knowledge from the social sciences in the study of international security problems. SSP’s primary task is educating the next generation of security scholars and practitioners. For more information, contact Laura Kerwin (ikerwin@mit.edu), Room E40-477, 617-258-7608.

MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives (MISTI) is MIT’s hub for global experiences. MISTI’s unparalleled internship, research, teaching and study abroad programs offer students unique experiences that bring MIT’s one-of-a-kind education model to life in countries around the world. MISTI programs are carefully designed to complement on-campus coursework and research, and rigorous, country-specific preparation enables students to forge cultural connections and play a role in addressing important global challenges while abroad. In a typical year, MISTI matches MIT undergraduate and graduate students with over 1,200 placements in internships, research, and teaching abroad. Students come away from their experience with invaluable perspectives that inform their education, career, and worldview. MISTI embodies MIT’s commitment to global engagement and prepares students to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world. For more information, contact misti@mit.edu.

Seminar XXI is an educational program for senior military officers, government and NGO officials, and executives in the national security policy community. The program’s objective is to provide future leaders of that community with enhanced analytic skills for understanding foreign countries and the relations among them. The fundamental criterion for fellows is that candidates should reach top decision-making levels in the next three to five years. The program explores key policy issues by examining countries and problems critical to American interests through a variety of paradigmatic lenses. For more information, contact Tisha Gomes Voss (tisvag@mit.edu), Room E40-445, 617-258-6862.

The MIT Policy Lab works to develop and enhance the connections between MIT research and public policy to better serve the nation and the world in the 21st century. The Policy Lab identifies policy-relevant research on campus, works with faculty to create and implement outreach strategies to engage relevant policymakers and other stakeholders in dialogue, and provides training to make faculty engagement with the policy world effective. For more information, contact Drew Story (dstory@mit.edu), E40-433, 617-258-9440.

The Human Rights and Technology Program explores how technology impacts human rights reporting, and how rights are challenged by technological advances. It supports student research and public discourse on these topics. For more information, contact Sabina Van Mell (svanmell@mit.edu), E40-444D, 617-253-8306.

The Inter-University Committee on International Migration, created more than 30 years ago, organizes the Myron Weiner seminar series, honoring the late MIT professor and pioneer in migration studies. The committee also undertakes other projects on an ad hoc basis. Member institutions are Boston University, Brandeis University, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts, Harvard, MIT, Tufts University, and Wellesley College. The committee is hosted at MIT by CIS. For more information, contact Sabina Van Mell, svanmell@mit.edu, E40-444D, 617-253-8306.

The Program on Emerging Technologies (PoET) encourages responsible technological innovation, with research on the political economy of innovation and on adaptive risk governance. Work on synthetic biology is conducted in partnership with technologists at the MIT Synthetic Biology Center and the Harvard Wyss Institute. Work on biomedical issues is conducted in partnership with the MIT Center for Biomedical Innovation and the Tufts Center for Translational Medicine. Work on information security and privacy is conducted in partnership with the Internet Policy Research Institute of the MIT Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL). PoET provides policy recommendations to a wide range of governmental and nongovernmental organizations, including the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, NIH National Science Advisory Board on Biosecurity, Environmental Protection Agency, Defense Intelligence Board, UN World Health Organization, UN Biological Weapons Convention, European Medicines Agency, and the National Academy of Sciences. For more information, contact Kenneth Oye (oye@mit.edu), E40-437, 617-253-3412.

CIS offers the Summer Study Grants and the Jeanne Guillemin Prize, intended for advanced doctoral students at MIT working in close
collaboration with faculty members on any international aspect of energy, environment, and international affairs. The Guillemin Prize is a new offering with the same criteria, exclusively for women. For more information, contact Rodney Walkes (walkes@mit.edu), E40-426, 617-253-3925.

Fellows
The center also offers fellowships and educational experiences to individuals who have held senior positions in public life, journalists, current and future leaders in the US armed forces, governments agencies, NGOs, and private companies. Fellowships are awarded to students and scholars who are working on a range of global security issues. For more information, contact John Congdon (congdon@mit.edu), E40-435, 617-253-8998.

Events and Seminars
The MIT Starr Forum is the center’s flagship public event series. The forum brings to campus leading academics, policymakers, and journalists to discuss pressing issues in the world of international relations and US foreign policy. Individual programs host seminars on a range of international topics, such as migration, national defense, and cultural immersion. Others are focused on specific regions and explore domestic and foreign policy issues in Russia, the Middle East, and South Asia. For more information, contact Michelle English (english7@mit.edu), Room E40-443, 617-253-1965.