ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The undergraduate programs at MIT are designed to help students develop the knowledge and capabilities needed to meet the challenges of modern society. An MIT education joins the power of a specific discipline to a concern for social values and goals. In addition to developing expertise in a given field, undergraduates are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities for broad learning at MIT and to become creative, intellectual leaders and problem solvers whose passion for learning is lifelong.

Central to the MIT undergraduate experience is the concept that a four-year residential college requires a full-time academic program. An MIT degree represents not only a specified number of credit units and a collection of subjects, but an intensity and continuity of involvement in an academic enterprise and an immersion in the culture of MIT. In general, MIT is not an appropriate place to pursue an undergraduate education on an extended, part-time basis.

MIT students base their studies on a core of subjects in science, mathematics, and the humanities, arts, and social sciences (the General Institute Requirements [GIRs] (*https://catalog.mit.edu/mit/undergraduate-education/general-institute-requirements*)). They major in the physical or biological sciences, in management science, in architecture or urban studies and planning, in an area of the humanities, arts, and social sciences, or in one of the engineering fields. In the first year, many students take subjects from a variety of options in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and humanities, arts, and social sciences. During the second year, students generally continue their studies with subjects meeting various Institute requirements and beginning subjects in departmental programs. In the third and fourth years, students focus on the departmental programs.

There is also time for students to take elective subjects each year. These elective opportunities allow students to follow social interests or to enrich their educational backgrounds. Students may also use elective time to prepare for study in a professional field such as medicine or law or to begin work toward graduate study. Students may also pursue minors in many fields.

One of the most exciting features of undergraduate education at MIT is the opportunity for students to join with faculty in ongoing research projects. For example, experiences in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) (*https://catalog.mit.edu/mit/undergraduate-education/academic-research-options/undergraduate-research-opportunities-program*) encourage intellectual commitment and self-direction, and often provide a focus for students' undergraduate studies. During the Independent Activities Period (IAP) (*https://catalog.mit.edu/mit/undergraduate-education/academic-research-options/independent-activities-period*) in January, students can spend time in workshops, independent research projects, intensive subjects and seminars, field trips, lecture series, and other activities that do not easily fit into the traditional academic calendar.

To complete work for a bachelor's degree in any Course (major), each student must fulfill the General Institute Requirements and must complete the departmental program specified by that Course. Details on General Institute Requirements and on selecting a major course of study are discussed elsewhere in this section.

The program for the SB takes four years of full-time study for most students. Of the first-year undergraduates who entered between 2015 and 2019, the percentage of students who received their degrees within six years of entrance was about 96 percent.