International Applicants: Helpful Tips

International students are an important and vital part of the MIT community, and MIT Admissions works hard each year to ensure a diverse class of students from around the world.

In the MIT freshman admissions process, you are considered an international applicant if you are not a citizen or a permanent resident (Green Card holder) of the United States. (Please note that if you have already entered university you must apply to MIT as a transfer student.)

International admission to MIT is very competitive. There are many more qualified international students who apply than there are available spaces in the class. Each year, more than 2,000 international students apply, and approximately 100 are admitted.

Admission to MIT is all about finding the right match. First, you identify the universities you feel are best suited for you; then, we choose the students we feel are the best fit for the MIT culture. This means that MIT Admissions is much more of an art than a science. While test scores and grades are certainly evaluated, our process considers each applicant as an entire person - drive, excitement, personality, and talents.

The Application Requirements

The application deadline for all international students is January 1 of the year in which you hope to enroll; all incoming freshmen enter in September. The freshman application form is the same for all applicants, international or domestic (there is no separate international application form). The application consists of the following components:

Biographical Information Form - Part 1 of the two-part application for freshman admission should be completed and returned immediately.

Essays, Activities, and Tests Form - Part 2 of the two-part application for freshman admission should be returned as soon as possible, but no later than January 1. One long and two short essays are required.

Standardized Tests - Testing must be completed by the January test date. These dates change each year and are set by the testing agency. Click here for specifics on our testing requirements.

Two Teacher Evaluation Forms - Evaluation A is to be completed by a math or science teacher, Evaluation B is to be completed by a humanities, social science, or language teacher. It is your responsibility to provide us with an official English translation of any evaluations not completed in English, in addition to the original untranslated document.

Secondary School Report Form - This form, which includes your school transcript, is to be completed by a guidance counselor or principal/headmaster. If your school offers predicted grades for the IB or A Levels, this should be included in the Secondary School Report Form. It is your responsibility to provide us with an official English translation of any letters or transcripts not written in English, in addition to the original untranslated document.

Interview - The interview is conducted by an MIT graduate in the applicant's home area. If available, you should contact your interviewer by the December 10th before your application deadline.

Mid-year Grade Report Form - If you are not attending a U.S. or U.S.-based school system, you are not required to complete this form. It will appear on your MyMIT application tracking system as it does for all applicants, but it is not a required piece of the application if you are not attending a U.S. or U.S.-based school system.

It is your responsibility to ensure that all components of the application reach us. You can view which components we have received via the online tracking system at MyMIT. Since postal mail is expensive and sometimes unreliable, you may wish to have your Teacher Evaluation Forms, Secondary School Report Form, and anything else that needs to be sent to us in hardcopy mailed in the same package. Please be sure that everything you mail to us is clearly marked with your name (please underline your family name) and date of birth. Please do not submit any application materials in binders or folders.

Your application will be read by a committee of experienced MIT admissions officers. We are familiar with many international school systems, including, but not limited to, the IB, A Levels, the French Baccalaureat, and CBSE, and we assure you that we will understand your curriculum and your context. Your application will be reviewed within the context of the resources available to you, including your situation as affected by family, school, culture, region, and country.

Testing Requirements

Non-native English speakers have two options, which we consider equivalent. We have no preference between these options. It is your choice, and you should take the set of tests with which you feel the most comfortable:

Option 1: SAT Reasoning Test or the ACT Plus Writing; and two SAT Subject Tests: one in math (level 1 or 2), and one in science (physics, chemistry, or biology e/m).

Option 2: TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language); and two SAT Subject Tests, one in math (level 1 or 2) and one in science (physics, chemistry, or biology e/m). This option is especially recommended for students who do not speak English at home or in school, or who have been speaking English for fewer than five years.

Native English speakers must take either the SAT Reasoning Test or the ACT Plus Writing; and two SAT Subject Tests: one in math (level 1 or 2), and one in science (physics, chemistry, or biology e/m).

All students must meet the testing requirements. You may not substitute other exams (such as IB, A Levels, etc.) for the above testing requirements. Students from countries where the SAT and ACT are not offered (such as Iran and the People's Republic of China) will be considered without a full set of required test scores on a case-by-case basis.

We have no minimum or recommended scores for the SAT Reasoning Test, the ACT Plus Writing, or the SAT Subject Tests. You may wish to view testing statistics from the most recent admissions cycle here).

However, we do have minimum and recommended scores for the TOEFL. These minimums are in place to ensure your level of English proficiency. Because MIT offers no English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, and English is the language of MIT, all students must show that they will thrive in our community. The minimum TOEFL scores are: Minimum Recommended

Paper Based Test (PBT) 577 600+

Computer Based Test (CBT) 233 250+

Internet Based Test (iBT) 90 100+

Your scores must be reported to us officially from the testing agency; scores you list on your application and scores appearing on your school transcript will not be considered official. We recommend you list MIT as a school to receive your scores when you take the test. If you take the January test, you must list MIT as a school to recieve your scores or we will not receive your scores in time for our review. Our SAT and TOEFL code is 3514 and our ACT code is 1858.

It is important for all students - and very important for international students - to register for tests with the same name as you have indicated on your application and MyMIT account. Your record and test scores will not be linked in our system if the names do not match.

You can get more information and register for the SAT tests online at www.collegeboard.com, the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) at www.ets.org/toefl, and the ACT at www.act.org.

Important Undergraduate Admissions DatesAs soon as possible Register for a MyMIT account

As soon as possible after

August 1 of your application year Complete application Part 1

December 10 Deadline to contact your EC to schedule an interview.

January 1 Deadline for applications to be postmarked

January Last month to take standardized tests. If you take the January test, you must list MIT as a school to receive your scores when you take the test or we will not receive them in time for our review.

February 15 Receipt deadline for all financial aid materials

Late March Applicants notified of admissions decision

May 1 Postmark deadline for enrollment decision of accepted student

Please remember that international postal mail can be quite slow, and we strongly urge applicants from outside the United States to mail their application documents to MIT well in advance of the application deadline.

Recommended Coursework Prior to Applying to MIT

Four years of English

Mathematics through calculus

Two or more years of history / social studies

Biology

Chemistry

Physics

Interviews

MIT graduates, called Educational Counselors (or ECs), around the world volunteer to interview students who apply to MIT. You will receive your interviewer's name and contact information via your MyMIT account. Please note that there may be no interviewer in your area, in which case we will waive your interview. You are not required to have an interview, but if you choose to have one, it is your responsibility to schedule it. The deadline to contact your EC to schedule an interview is December 10th.

Financial Aid for International Students

International students are eligible for financial aid. As with US citizens and permanent residents, we consider every student for admission without regard to his or her financial need. In other words, applying for financial aid will not hurt your chances of admission. We admit the students best matched for MIT, regardless of their financial situation.

What's more, MIT is committed to providing all admitted students, including international students, with a financial aid package that fully meets their demonstrated need. Greater than 80% of MIT international students receive financial aid in the form of grant/scholarship (the average grant for international students is over $30,000 per year), totaling more than $8 million annually disbursed to international students.

Much more information is available through the Financial Aid Office.