



MIT MSA Muslim Guide



To MIT
pre-fresh edition



Dear Class of 2021,

Assalam Alaikum! Congratulations on your admission to MIT! We understand that you soon have to make a lot of life-defining choices, so we want to make sure that we give you all the support we can offer as you make your decisions.

This guide is meant to offer you a better idea of what resources the MIT Muslim Students' Association (MSA) has should you decide to be a part of our great community. We'd also like to provide some insights into what people at the MSA are up to so that you are convinced that the MIT MSA is one of the best places to grow personally, spiritually, academically, as well as on other fronts.

Sincerely,
MIT MSA



Oh Allah, you know that our hearts have come together in loving You, met together in Your obedience. Oh Allah, keep our minds strong with knowledge for Your sake, guide our hands to the best of actions, to grow and benefit the MIT community, the United States, the Islamic civilization, and the whole of humanity as leaders, engineers, innovators and entrepreneurs.

MSA Introduction

The MSA executive board has set forth multiple core values that drive the organization's decisions and which remain a central theme as we plan our programs and activities. Our main values are: growth, unity, service, inclusiveness, engagement, and integrity.

We also place a lot of emphasis on mentorship and the power it has to cultivate the future leaders, innovators, and engineers that the world so preciously needs. As you will see in this guide, we make it our goal as the MSA to develop our members and aid them on their paths of personal growth so that they augment MIT's excellent technical education to emerge as great engineers who pursue positive change across the world.

We are also committed to serving Muslims on campus with whatever they may need to practice their religion, while remaining connected to the larger MIT community. We provide a great community centered on social events to make sure we are having an awesome college experience, and we are really excited to having you becoming part of this incredible community inshAllah!

MSA Executive Committee

- Chaplains: Sr Hoda Elsharkawi (hoda.elsharkawi@gmail.com), Br Samer Naseredden (samer@masboston.org)
- President: Myra Ahmad '19 (myraa@mit.edu)
- Vice President: Sally Beiruti '19 (sbeiruti@mit.edu)
- Academic Committee: Zareen Choudhury '18, Habiba Noamany '20, Ihssan Tinawi '18
- Community Service Committee: Rahma Zakaria '19, Jeba Sania '20, Hannah Kherzai '20
- Mussallah Officer: Bahrudin Tribalic '20
- Outreach Committee: Farah Kabir '19, Amro Alshareef '20
- Professional Committee: Bilal Azhar '20, Mohammed Nasir '20, Moin Nadeem '20
- Publicity Committee: Dana Dabbousi '19, Mariam Dogar '20
- Social Committee: Ayse Guvenilir '20, Harith Morgan '20, Fayed Ali '19, Mohammed Al Jashmi '19, Gadam Myratgeldiyev '18
- Special projects: Mehmet Efe Akengin'20, Riyadh Bagdadi Post-doc
- Spiritual Committee: Zulkayda Mamat '19, Zahra Rasouli '19, Marwa Abdulhai '20
- Treasurer: Wasay Anwer '19, Baraa Abd Aldaim '20
- Webmaster: Abdurrahman Akkas '18

Website: msa.mit.edu

FB Page: <https://www.facebook.com/mitmsa>

Contact Executive Committee: msa-ec-current@mit.edu

Faces of the MSA

**Zulkayda Mamat**

zulym@mit.edu
Hometown: Eastern
Turkistan
Major: Biological Engineering
Year: Class of 2019
Residence: McCormick

“...I've met extraordinary people through MSA who have since impacted every facet of my life positively and generously. My understanding of the world increased not only in my deen, but also in the development of my personal relationships with people within MSA. I feel that I am a happier and more productive individual because I learned from the mentorship of various people in the MSA...”

**Ihssan Tinawi**

itinawi@mit.edu
Hometown: Damascus
Major: Electrical Engineering & Computer Science and

“During the annual senior send-off in my freshman year, we got together and watched movies that summarized the graduating classes' journey through MIT and the MSA. It was at that point that I realized how beautiful the MSA community was and how blessed I was to be part of it.”

**Marwa Abdulhai**

abdulhai@mit.edu
Major: Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
Year: Class of 2020
Residence: McCormick

“Being part of the MSA has really helped me keep my deen in check and find other Muslims who also constantly struggle in balancing both the dunya and deen parts of their lives... I really believe that the MSA and the people in it have helped me really "know" Islam and continue to remember the reasons why it is the biggest blessing in my life.”

Faces of the MSA

**Mohamed Hassan Kane**

mhkane@mit.edu
Hometown: Ivory Coast
Major: Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
Year: Class of 2017
Residence: East Campus

“The MSA has been the first group to reach out to me as an admitted student. The first words I read from an MIT student were "Salam" and knowing this community existed made me strongly consider coming to MIT being reassured that I would be encouraged during my practice of Islam...I've had many high quality friendships developed with the members of this community which I am sure will last beyond college”

Ayse Guvenilir

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Hometown: New York
Major: Biological Engineering
Year: Class of 2020
Residence: McCormick

“I realized that I had another family at MIT during my first month in college...The fact that we barely knew each other mattered because it showed how welcoming we all were from the start. We were together in this MIT experience regardless. The first night, we went star gazing and talked about our hopes for the semester and for the world. It showed me how much the MSA cared.”

Harith Morgan

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Hometown: New York
Major: Mechanical Engineering
Year: Class of 2020
Residence: Maseeh

“One of my fondest memories is when about 8-10 of us had a late night chat during the fall retreat. It was a quick hike into the woods where we found a spot off the edge of the lake. We talked about our aspirations as students from MIT, our qualms as young adults of this era, and our hopes as developing Muslims.”

What do you like most about our MSA?

“Pshh, easy. Free food. Next question.” --Fayed Ali ‘19

“I really like that it allows me to interact with a diverse group of people that spans across a number of majors and class years that are willing to help me at 8am with classes or stay up till 3am discussing goals over a pset.” --Hanna Kherzai ‘20

“Although I am not super close with many individuals within the MSA, they have always been supportive and there for me whenever I needed advice or mentorship. All of the MSA folks genuinely want to do their best to help the others just because that other person is their Muslim brother or sister. And many of them actively seek to help you, they don't even wait for you to ask because they know even asking can be hard sometimes...It makes me proud to be part of the MSA community here.” --Hossam Kherraz ‘19

“I didn't expect myself to be part of the MSA, but as soon as I arrived on campus...I have surrounded myself with friends who were either involved with the MSA or really enjoyed the MSA events so I started attending more of the MSA events which were very inclusive and diverse to appeal to as many people as possible. What I really appreciated in the MSA is the sense of community where we help each other to grow and become better people on the personal and professional level.” --Mohammed Al Jashmi ‘19

“I discovered the MSA community a lot later in my MIT career, but immediately found an open, welcoming community. I enjoy attending formally planned events, like the Spring Dinner, Connect, and Charity Week events, as well as informal gatherings. These include dinners at McCormick dining, birthday celebrations, and impromptu hangouts. I've met a lot of wonderful people and made great friends through MIT MSA, and only wish I had become a part of this community earlier!” --Zareen Choudhury ‘18

“We foster such a great sense of community; we are welcoming towards anyone regardless of background and that's a value that's hard to find in the world.” --Aleena Shabbir ‘20

What do you like most about our MSA?

"I love our MSA's culture. We're like a little family - comfortable enough to kid and joke around with each other but also tight enough to always be there for each other in times of need and stress. It's truly one of the best communities I've been involved in." --Mariam Dogar '20

"We develop strong personal bonds with people whom we share similar values with... The MSA is more than a club. It's a place where you can find people who see the world the way you do and everyone has something amazing to contribute to making the MSA awesome." --Bilal Azhar '20

"The Muslim culture at MIT is immersive and transforming. We are not merely a group of friends tied by our common social tendencies. We are a community of hearts and minds beating with the values and principles of Islam, of living a righteous and moral life, and making the world a better place. At MIT MSA, this starts with becoming life-long friends who enjoy each other's company, push each other to become better versions of themselves and to transform the world into a better version of itself. However, for the members of MSA, this culture of cultivation is like the ocean for the dolphin. We live with it, and we live in it, but the culture operates like the life-sustaining magic in making, taking care of, and creating an amazing community." -Mehmet Efe Akengin '18

Funny Quotes

"Don't give up. It's called a garbage can, not a garbage cannot. So you can do this too." --Wasay Anwer '19

"We spend so much time consuming, we gotta start producing." --Ali Abdalla '17

"I can't sleep...I'm going to build a drone" --Mohammed Nasir '20

"Ivy leagues are overrated because they choose people who are smart and work hard, but MIT chooses people who are smart enough to figure out ways not to work hard" --Amro Alshareef '20

"That sounds really cool! Would you like to take the lead on that? [ie. I don't want anything to do with this]" --Mehmet Efe Akengin '18

"Oh shoot I just slept for 26 hours" --Bilal Azhar '20

FAQs

I only eat zabiha/halal meat; what are my dining options around campus?

MIT's BonAppetit, which provides food in the dining halls, is actually very inclusive concerning dietary restrictions. Many of the dorms, particularly McCormick dining, offer halal, vegetarian, and vegan options. Cafe Spice and Shawarma Shack in the Student Center (W20) also offer halal meals.

What do I have to do if I want a Muslim roommate?

If you indicated that you wanted a Muslim roommate in the housing form there's a pretty good chance you'll be paired with another Muslim. Additionally, if you and a specific person agree to be roommates, just write in each other's name on the housing form.

Is there a minimum time commitment I have to fulfill in order to be apart of the MSA?

The MSA is a relaxed and friendly student group meant to provide support and guidance to the Muslim community on campus. There are no strict guidelines, no application process, and no mandatory time commitments.

I wear a headscarf, and I'm worried I won't be able to find hijab-friendly living accommodations on campus. What should I do?

No worries, there are plenty of options. Many of our female members opt to live in McCormick Hall - an all female residence dorm located five minutes away from main campus. Simmons Hall also provides private bathrooms suites. Additionally, there are many off campus living groups such as WILG (Women's Independent Living Group) and sorority houses that can accommodate you.

Are there networking opportunities within the MSA?

Definitely, and we encourage you to do so! We have an ever-growing alumni network spanning across the globe with members in companies such as Google, Al-Jazeera, Tesla, Apple, Palantir, Goldman Sachs, McKinsey, Novartis, etc. Both graduates and undergraduates are more than willing to offer guidance and advice on a range of topics including internships, classes, and countless other opportunities. We also hold networking events with alums, executive MBAs, grad students, and undergrads.

I don't consider myself very religious, can I still join the MSA?

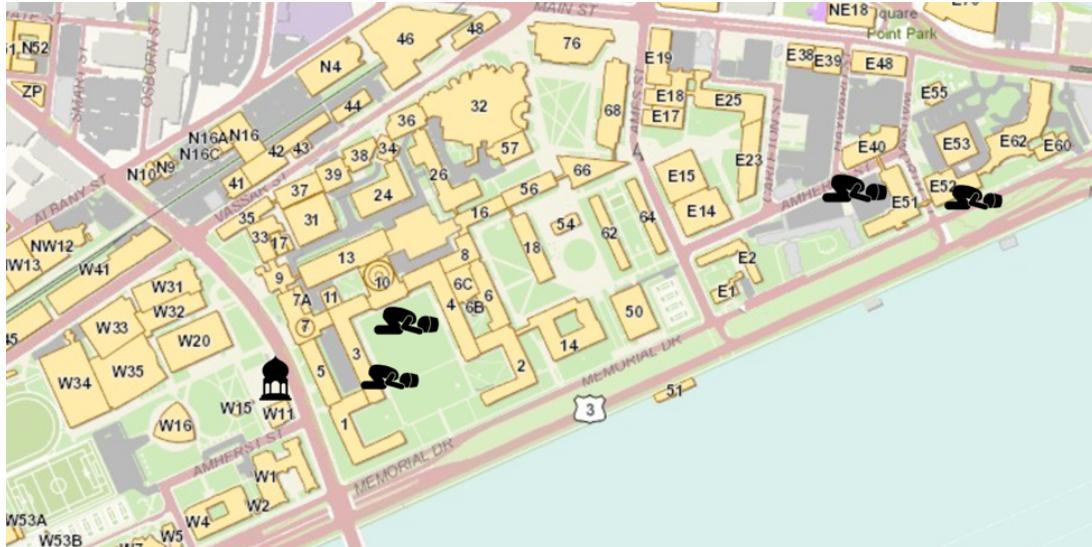
While the MIT MSA is a spiritual group, there are also many other facets to the MSA. We also serve as a social and professional organization. If you're looking for a tight knit community to take summer trips along the coast or to build a startup with, you're with the right people.

Around MIT

Prayer Spaces

MSA maintains a prayer room (Musalla) with daily prayers at Religious Activites Center (W11), including jumu'ah prayers every Friday. Musalla is open 24/7 for everyone. You need an MIT ID to get in the building during the night, but other times you can just walk in without an ID.

Jumu'ah (Friday) prayers are held every week at Musalla (during the academic year and the summer) at 1:25pm.



MSA Culture

It is hard to exactly describe the MSA's culture. We all come from different backgrounds, we all have different experiences, and we all bring this together to form the Muslim Student Association here at MIT. That being said, here is what we do know...

Demographics

The MSA prides itself in its diverse community. Our brothers and sisters come from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Sudan, Iran, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Palestine, to name a few.

Our members span a wide range of majors as well, including Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science, Biological Engineering, Economics, Physics, Political Science, and Mathematics.

We have diverse interests and are involved in a number of activities and organizations, such as the Undergraduate Association, Entrepreneurship and Startups, MIT Sailing Team, the Gordon Engineering Leadership Program, Mujeres Latinas, MIT Undergraduate Research Journal, Engineers Without Borders, TechX, and UROPs.

Dorms

The majority of sisters live in McCormick, an all women's dorm on campus. We also have sisters in Simmons Hall, New House, Senior House & Burton Conner.

The majority of brothers live in Maseeh Hall (specifically on Maseeh 5th floor). We also have members in Burton Conner, East Campus, MacGregor House, New House, Next House, and Simmons Hall.

Spiritual

The sisters who live in McCormick tend to pray fajr together on the third floor of the east tower (3E).

The brothers who live in Maseeh tend to pray fajr together on Maseeh 5.

In the Musallah in the Religious Center (W11), Jummah occurs on Fridays at 1:20 pm-2pm, and Isha prayers occur nightly at 9:00 pm.

Dinner

We tend to eat dinner in McCormick everyday because one, it is far superior to Maseeh Dining (debatable), and two, it most consistently serves halal food. They also have pretty nice stir fry options, a Soul Food Night every two weeks with which always has halal chicken, and an exclusive monthly barbecue with halal burgers and hotdogs prepared by Raul, one of the housemasters at McCormick.



Birthdays

We tend to surprise everyone on their birthdays (as long as they celebrate their birthday). So, find out your fellow classmates' birthdays and then keep the surprises on the DL (downlow).

Retreats

We have retreats every semester, with one semester having a social, fun retreat and the other semester more spiritual. Last fall we had our social retreat in the White Mountains in New Hampshire.

Ramadan

We have a committee that makes sure we have iftar every night during Ramadan, so we've got you covered for food

Alumni

MIT MSA alumni become technology leaders, executives, engineers, innovators, scientists, and even politicians. Some remarkable alumni include:
 Imdad Mouline, serial entrepreneur, the CTO of Everbridge, MIT Undergraduate Class of 1991.
 Nadeem Mazen, the Cambridge City Councilor, MIT Undergraduate Class of 2006
 Suhail Laher, former MIT Muslim Chaplain, Instructor at Harvard University, MIT Undergraduate Class of 1993

- **List of Nearby Halal Restaurants**
 - Black Seed
 - Punjabi Grill
 - Highland Pizza
 - Turkish Brookline Family Restaurant
 - Darul Kabab
 - The Maharaja Restaurant
 - Life Alive
 - Chutney's
 - Kolbeh of Kabob