

International applicants

MIT has a very long history of educating international students, and we continue to welcome them today.

If you are an international student, you may not be familiar with the application process for American colleges, including MIT. This is a quick overview to help you understand how applying to an American school like MIT works. Some of the information in here is also true for American colleges other than MIT, but you should make sure to check with other schools before applying.

In addition to this page, there are several organizations that will help you learn how to apply to American universities, including MIT. We particularly recommend Education USA, especially their helpful 5 Steps to U.S. Study and local advising centers.

Am I international?

For the purposes of the application, MIT considers any student who does not hold United States citizenship or permanent residency to be an international applicant, regardless of where they live or attend school.⁰¹ U.S. permanent residents are those students who have an official copy of their green card in hand. If you are in the *process* of obtaining a green card, then you are considered by MIT to be an international student. If you are a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, then you are considered a domestic applicant.

However, whether you are a domestic applicant or an international applicant does *not* impact when or how you apply or the financial aid you are offered. Rather, this page is simply intended to be a helpful resource for people who are less familiar with the American educational system and are trying to figure out how to apply to MIT.

When to apply

Most U.S. students apply to MIT at the beginning of their final year of high school, and international applicants should do the same. Only accepted students are required to send final grades, and we understand that they will not be available until the summer months. Most applicants are 17–19 years of age. Some may be younger, especially if they have studied ahead; some may be older, especially if their countries have mandatory military service after secondary school.

Students who have [already enrolled](#) at another university—either in America or abroad—must apply to MIT as a transfer student.

Grades & coursework

If you attended high school outside of the United States, your grades and subjects of study might have been very different than those of most American students. However, this will not negatively impact your application to MIT.

MIT admissions counselors are trained to understand the educational system in your part of the world. We do not try to convert your grades to the American system, or to find other sorts of equivalence. You will not be competing against your classmates or students in other parts of the world; we do not have caps or quotas for countries. We consider each student as an individual as they proceed through our process. However, all students need to demonstrate minimum competence in fields they will continue to study at MIT. Visit our [What to do in high school page](#) to see what we recommend that all students study.

Standardized tests

We [require the SAT or the ACT](#) for both prospective first year and transfer students. We do not require the ACT writing or science sections or the SAT optional essay. We accept both the paper and digital SAT.

For non-native English speakers, we strongly recommend providing the results of an [English proficiency exam](#) if you have been using English for fewer than 5 years or do not speak English at home or in school, so that we may consider that information alongside the rest of your application.

Competitive scores

We do not have cut off or recommended scores for the ACT or SAT as scores are evaluated within an applicant's context. We do have minimum and recommended scores for our English language tests, you can learn more on the [Tests & scores](#) page.

1. We recognize that this designation may not correspond to the lived experience of many applicants (including [undocumented students](#)) who have spent significant time in the United States, or those who have a liminal status as asylees, refugees, or stateless persons. This classification is federally defined for the purpose of statistical records, but please know that we understand life is more rich and complicated than a checkbox, and

we take that into account when reading your essays and evaluating your application.[back to text](#)[↑]

2. Exceptions may be granted to students in the southern hemisphere, on an alternate calendar, who begin their college education *while* undergoing our application process.[back to text](#)[↑]