Visiting Student FAQ

- How do I apply to be a visiting student at MIT?
  - Students who are pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree at an institution of higher education other than MIT and have been invited by an MIT department or laboratory/center to do research in their fields of study may apply for visiting student status.
  - There is no central application to apply as a visiting student. Instead, individual faculty members must invite visiting students to their lab to engage in research.
  - Current MIT regular or special students, or MIT students who have withdrawn or are on a leave of absence, cannot apply for visiting student status.
  - The International Students Office (ISO) coordinates all student visits and processes all visa documents for international Visiting Students. The ISO can be consulted for more information.

- How long can I stay?
  - The maximum visit length is 12 months with the exception for Harvard and Wellesley students, and students coming to MIT with a newly hired faculty member.
  - MIT visa sponsorship for participation as a Visiting Student is limited to a maximum of 12 months.
  - Visiting students will be admitted for the period of time specified in the initial invitation letter with appointments beginning on 1st & 15th of a month and ending on the 30th of a month.
  - If the 1st or 15th falls on a weekend or holiday, the visit should start on the next business day (e.g. if the 1st falls on a Saturday, the official visit start date should be Monday, the 3rd.) Visits start dates should coincide with business days.
    - Available Visit Start Dates for 2022
      - January 3/14
      - February 1/15
      - March 1/15
      - April 1/15
      - May 2/13
      - June 1/15
      - July 1/15
      - August 1/15
      - September 1/15
      - October 3/14
      - November 1/15
      - December 1/15
- What is the minimum number of weeks I can stay?
  - Duration of the visit must be a minimum of three weeks.
- What documents do I need to submit as part of the application to be a visiting student?

- ○ Once you have been invited to MIT as a visiting student, you will need to submit the following documents to the Visiting Student Onboarding app for review by the department and subsequent approval of the School/College Dean's Office as an official visiting student at MIT:
    - Curriculum Vitae
    - Official Undergraduate and/or Graduate Transcripts
    - Completed IPIA
    - Mentoring plan acknowledgement
    - Signed Visiting Student acknowledgement
- Am I required to be vaccinated for COVID-19?
  - ○ Yes, all students are required to be vaccinated before their start date, or to have an approved medical or religious exemption as part of [MIT's return to campus](#) plan. For more details [see this FAQ](#). Concerns or questions about meeting the requirement, including concerns about traveling if unvaccinated, contact vaccine-requirement@mit.edu to discuss your particular situation.
- What kind of health insurance do I need?
  - ○ All visiting students are required to purchase the combination of MIT Basic plus the MIT Student Extended Insurance Plan (MIT SEIP). This plan meets J-1 and Massachusetts State regulations required for International Students specified by the federal regulations for J-1 students. This is included in the Visiting Student monthly fee. (Please note exceptions may only be made for students enrolled at universities and colleges in Massachusetts if they can provide documentation showing that they are enrolled in their home institution's health insurance plan.)
- Can I take classes?
  - ○ A visiting student is a non-degree student who is approved to conduct research on campus for a set duration. Visiting students are **not** allowed to take classes.
  - ○ Regular students are not allowed to change to visiting student status. For more information on special students, visit the [Registrar site](#).
- Can I conduct research off of MIT's campus?
  - ○ International visiting student research must be conducted on the MIT campus only.
- Will MIT provide housing during my visit?
  - ○ Visiting students are not entitled to on-campus housing and, in most cases, should plan to find accommodations off campus. Students may contact [Off-Campus Housing](#) for assistance. However, they may apply for any vacancies that exist in the dormitories after the needs of degree students have been met.
- What should I do if my dates change or if I need to extend my visit?
  - ○ Visiting Students should first consult with their MIT host department regarding any date changes or extensions.. Once approved, international students should work with ISO to update their DS-2019 form.
- How much does it cost?
  - ○ See the [Visiting Student Fee structure](#) to determine the cost of your visit.
- How do I pay my bill?

- ○ Visiting students should pay their bill in full, online before arrival. Students will not be registered for their visit dates if they have not paid their Visiting Student Fees prior to their arrival.
- Can I be paid by my host group?
  - ○ A Visiting Student may receive compensation for work done for the host research group. *However, please note that J-1 visa regulations limit the number of hours an International Visiting Student can be paid to 20 HOURS per week including Summer and IAP. International Visiting Students are not allowed to have any other form of on-campus employment. International Visiting Students are not allowed to have any other employment, on-campus or off-campus, under Federal Regulations.*
- What should I do when I arrive?
  - ○ Complete iMIT Online Check-In E-Form
  - ○ Attend a J-1 Visiting Student Orientation immediately upon arrival in the US.
  - ○ Obtain MIT ID Card.
  - ○ If an International Visiting Student, Report your SEVIS US Address and SEVIS International Address in WebSIS.
- How do I register for each term?
  - ○ Although <u>Visiting Students are not allowed to participate in any academic courses</u>, they are required to register in Course (Department #) NIV (Non-Institute Visitor) for a specific NIV research subject **every semester**. Students will be automatically registered based on the start and end dates of their approved appointment upon completion of all onboarding and orientation requirements.

Additional information for International Visiting Students

- What visa do I need if I am an international student?
  - Foreign Visiting Students who are pursuing a degree abroad must apply for the J-1 Exchange Visitor visa (Student Non-Degree category) sponsored by MIT. No J-1 Academic Training can be authorized.
  - Foreign Visiting Students who are pursuing a degree at an U.S. institution must remain on their current student visa (F, J, or M visa) status sponsored by the home institution, and maintain their full-time enrollment at the home institution, and will be returning to their home institution after their Visiting Student stay at MIT to complete their degree..
    - Student's current visa status must provide eligibility for employment under the visa status.
    - Student should consult with the International Student Advisor at the home institution to secure appropriate employment authorization to participate in the MIT Visiting Student Program, and provide written confirmation of Employment Authorization to the MIT ISO.

- What is the processing timeline to receive my Certificate of Eligibility (Form DS-2019) from MIT?
    - **The appointment start date should be at least 90 days from the day ISO receives the required application documents on iMIT**. Please note that ISO cannot guarantee the requested start date if the application was received later than the above mentioned time period.
- What information is required to request a Certificate of Eligibility (Form DS-2019)?
    - Passport Information
    - Program Information
        - Letter of Enrollment from your home institution documenting current enrollment in a degree program, expected graduation date, and good academic standing.
        - Upload Invitation Letter from your MIT Host Department
    - Address Information
    - Financial Information
        - Please note that at least 51% of funding of the total cost of attendance must come from a source other than personal or family funds.
        - Additional information about funding requirements can be found here: https://iso.mit.edu/getting-started/requesting-an-i-20-or-ds-2019/financial-documentation-requirements/
- What funding do I need to demonstrate for my Certificate of Eligibility (Form DS-2019)?
    - International Students who require visa sponsorship from MIT must demonstrate funds covering the expected expenses (including estimated monthly living costs and Visiting Student Fees) during their visit. See Estimated Expenses on the ISO website.

- When can I arrive as an international student?
    - Please note that international Visiting Students are eligible to arrive to the U.S. in J-1 status up to 30 days prior to the Start Date on the Form DS-2019 and are required to attend the mandatory J-1 Visiting Student Orientation no later than 10 days from the appointment start date at MIT. Research activity cannot begin until the start date listed on the Form DS-2019. If there are any changes to the Start Date, the MIT host department or inviting MIT faculty member **MUST** inform the ISO and student so that a new Form DS-2019 can be issued. Students who fail to attend the orientation within this 10-day period will risk losing their immigration status.

Visiting Student Fee Structure

Visiting Students are subject to a monthly Visiting Student Fee that includes research, enrollment in MIT Student Extended Insurance Plan (MIT SEIP), and student life fees for the time of their stay. The monthly fee entitles visiting students to conduct research, use MIT's fitness facilities, participate in student life programming at the Institute, as well as access to care at MIT Medical. The Visiting Student fee is charged per month regardless of a student start date of the 1st or 15th and is required to be paid in full for the entire appointment, prior to the

student's arrival. For students wishing to enroll family members in health insurance, please consult the Health Plans Office.

In order for the ISO to issue a Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (Form DS-2019), the student must demonstrate financial support to meet or exceed the following minimum funding requirements for the full period of the student's appointment. Please review the estimated expenses for the 2021-2022 Academic Year as well as the [Visiting Student Fee chart](#) for other optional fees.