

## **International Scholars Office**

The International Scholars Office (ISchO) facilitates the visas for international researchers and faculty, who come to MIT for a variety of purposes. The ISchO advises on immigration matters, issues visa documents, and provides guidance, workshops, and print and web-based information on a wide range of issues relevant to the international scholar population. Weekly orientation sessions are held for all incoming scholars and family members. Orientation specifically for new international, tenure-track faculty members is held biannually. Workshops and question and answer sessions are held throughout the year for personnel administrators who work to process visas with the ISchO for the many departments, labs, and centers hosting internationals. Additional programming for scholars and events open to the campus community are held throughout the year. The ISchO also engages in advocacy efforts to protect international educational exchange, prevent burdensome regulations, and clarify and improve related regulations and procedures.

### **MIT's International Scholar Population, FY2008**

The ISchO served 1,748 international scholars affiliated with MIT as well as their accompanying family members during FY08. This reflects an increase of approximately 5.6 percent over last year (1,654). According to the most recent Institute of International Education Open Doors report (2006–2007), MIT ranked 12th nationally with regard to the numbers of international scholars at US institutions.

International scholars came to MIT from 86 countries, with the highest numbers coming from the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, Japan, India, Canada, Germany, Italy, France, Israel, and the United Kingdom. Scholars from these top 10 countries constitute 65.8 percent of MIT's international scholar population. This distribution of countries and percentages closely mirrors that of the entire international scholar population in the US.

The ISchO worked closely with administrators in 73 departments, laboratories, and centers to prepare the appropriate visa documents and petitions for incoming and continuing scholars and their families. The areas hosting the largest number of scholars were, in descending order, the Broad Institute, Chemistry Department, Research Laboratory of Electronics, Materials Science and Engineering Department, Chemical Engineering Department, Mechanical Engineering Department, Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, Biology Department, Sloan School of Management, and Mathematics Department. Seventy-eight percent of international scholars were male and 22 percent were female.

The majority of MIT's international scholars were sponsored on MIT's J-1 exchange visitor program. There were 820 scholars under MIT's J-1 program sponsorship during 2007–2008. An additional 130 scholars were here through other J sponsors. There were 344 scholars on campus in H-1B status, sponsored by MIT. This reflects a 5.5 percent increase since last year (326). Thirty-nine scholars were in TN status and 6 came on O-1 visas sponsored by MIT. The rest of the scholar population had other sponsors

or nonimmigrant categories. The ISchO submitted permanent residence petitions to US Citizenship and Immigration Services on behalf of several tenure-track faculty members and upper-level researchers. According to data from MIT's Human Resources Information System, 64 percent of MIT's postdoctoral associates and fellows are non-US citizens, as are 45 percent of "visiting" appointees.

**Penny Rosser**

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*More information about the International Scholars Office may be found at <http://web.mit.edu/scholars/>.*